

CHATHAM KIDS MATTER

AN EARLY CHILDHOOD NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR CHATHAM COUNTY
NOVEMBER 2023



The Chatham County Partnership for Children presents this work on behalf of the community members who helped make it possible and our funders Smart Start, Chatham Education Foundation, and Chatham County Government



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Research, Community Engagement, and Report by
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CHATHAM KIDS MATTER

EARLY CHILDHOOD NEEDS ASSESSMENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Introduction

The Chatham County Partnership for Children conducted a comprehensive needs assessment (Chatham Kids Matter Assessment) to understand challenges and opportunities for early childhood care and education in Chatham County, North Carolina. The assessment engaged parents, child care providers, educators, community leaders, and other stakeholders. Approximately 450 community members participated in Phase I (survey, focus groups, in-depth interviews) and Phase II (recorded interviews, community conversations) combined.

Key Findings

- Many families struggle to find affordable, quality child care with schedules that meet their needs. Shortages of care are acute for infants/toddlers.
- Cost of care is unaffordable for many families. Combined costs for housing and child care exceed half of household budgets.
- Access to care is inequitable, with fewer options in rural western/southern parts of the county. Latinx families face additional barriers.
- NC Pre-K, a state funded, high quality program for 4 year olds, has limited accessibility for qualifying working parents because of the time schedule and lack of transportation. Classes go underutilized.
- Child care workforce shortages stem from low pay, limited benefits, and lack of prestige. College program enrollment is declining.
- Independent child care providers are struggling to survive financially.
- Kindergarten readiness expectations vary between academics, social skills, and developmental milestones. Assessments are inconsistently applied.
- Health and social services, especially for mental health, are limited and often require out-of-county travel.

Stakeholder Recommendations

- Expand availability of affordable care, prioritizing underserved geographies
- Build public trust in and support for child care
- Address the funding gap between the real cost of child care and education and the funding available to providers
- Address child care workforce pipeline through education, prestige-building, and livable wages
- Enhance the NC Pre-K model to improve accessibility for working families
- Adopt consistent kindergarten readiness definition, measures, and community education
- Grow health and social services to promote early intervention and family wellbeing

Next Directions

- Further research workforce dynamics between public schools, NC Pre-K, Head Start, and private providers
- Convene stakeholders to prioritize recommendations and develop Early Childhood Action Plan
- Build public and political will to invest in early childhood care and education
- Ensure child care is considered in county growth planning



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	3
Introduction	3
Key Findings	3
Stakeholder Recommendations	4
Next Directions	4
Table of Contents	5
Project Summary	8
Introduction	8
Project Team	9
The Consulting Team & Partnership Staff	9
The Advisory Committee	9
The Community Collaborative	9
Phase I Methodology	10
Secondary Data	10
Surveys	10
Focus groups	13
Interviews	14
Phase II Methodology	15
Interviews	15
Films	15
Community Conversations	15
Guiding Frameworks and Principles	17
Early Childhood Action Plan Framework	17
Working with an Equity Perspective	18
Community Context - About Chatham County	19
Demographics	20
Income, Poverty and Vulnerability	22
Social Vulnerability Index	26
Employment	27
Anticipated Growth	29
Population growth	29
Employment Growth	29
Housing Affordability	31
Additional Data for Chatham County	32

Healthy Children	32
Low numbers of children receiving early intervention services	33
Health disparities by race exceed state levels	33
Food insecurity	34
Child maltreatment rates are declining; length of stay in foster care remains high	34
Community Context -Kindergarten Readiness	36
Kindergarten and School Enrollment 2022	39
Community Context - Child Care in Chatham County	40
Child care schedule options for families	43
Meals and food provisions	43
Child Care Subsidy	44
Pre-K	45
Child care enrollment	46
Findings	48
Parents’ perspectives	48
Living in Chatham County	48
Formal and informal child care	49
Child care availability in Chatham County	53
Access to high quality child care in Chatham Co	55
Child care affordability in Chatham	58
Child Care Subsidy	59
Raising healthy, happy kids	59
Access to health, mental health and early intervention services	59
Resources for recreation and family activities are limited	61
Providers perspective on child care in Chatham	61
Child care workforce	62
Child Care Worker Salaries & Benefits	64
Work Schedules and Hours	65
Locally owned child care businesses are struggling to remain viable	66
COVID stabilization grants are ending	67
Child care providers interested in expanding	67
Child care providers interested in increasing quality	68
Kindergarten Readiness	69
NC Pre-K Findings	71
A Universal Pre-K Option	75
Parent and Provider Perspectives on Universal Pre-K	75
Stakeholder Recommendations	77
Conclusions	79

Next Directions 84

About the Consultants 86

Appendix A: Glossary of Early Childhood Terms 87

Appendix B: Bibliography of Resources and References 89

Appendix C: Contributors 94

Appendix D: Parent Survey 97

Appendix E: Provider Data Collection 114

Appendix F: Focus Group and Interview Questions 121

Appendix G: List of Early Childhood Programs in Chatham County 124

Appendix H: Stakeholder recommendations 126

PROJECT SUMMARY

Introduction

Established in 1994, the Chatham County Partnership for Children (the Partnership) promotes opportunities for all young children to grow up safe, healthy, and able to succeed. The Partnership administers Smart Start funds and services for children ages birth through five and their families in Chatham County, North Carolina. Smart Start is North Carolina's statewide, award-winning early childhood initiative. In collaboration with community partners, the Partnership plans, funds, and implements quality care and education, health, and family support initiatives. The Partnership serves as the lead child care resource and referral agency for Chatham, Lee, Harnett, Johnston, and Wayne counties. Additionally, the Partnership administers the NC Pre- Kindergarten Program (NC Pre-K) in Chatham County and is a sponsoring organization for the Child Care and Adult Food Program (CACFP) supporting child care facilities in 18 North Carolina counties.

In 2022, the Partnership launched **Chattam Kids Matter**, a community needs assessment that will guide development of Chatham County's Early Childhood Action Plan. Chattam Kids Matter is aimed at studying and better understanding the attitudes, perspectives, and barriers to accessing early childhood education in Chatham County. To that end, the multi-faceted assessment considered these questions:

1. From the perspective of families, caregivers, and teachers, what are Chatham County's key opportunities and challenges, regarding the care and wellness of children from birth to five?
2. What are the opportunities for, barriers to, and demand for expanded access to high quality pre-K?

Partners for Impact and Community Voice Consulting collaborated to implement the Early Childhood Needs Assessment research and community engagement process. Phase I research included quantitative and qualitative primary data collection and analysis of secondary supporting data. Phase II followed with a robust community engagement process which included filmed interviews with parents, providers and community leaders and the development of a documentary film representing stakeholder views. The film, along with Phase I data, were then presented at a series of Community Conversations—public, facilitated listening sessions that enabled community members to respond to the research and make their own recommendations.

The Partnership will draw upon this assessment to develop a comprehensive, data informed, Early Childhood Action Plan and long-term financing model for investment in early childhood education and services for children from birth to kindergarten in Chatham County. For more information about this comprehensive project to improve care, education and services for the youngest of Chatham County’s residents, visit the website created for this project: chathamkidsmatter.org.

Project Team

The Consulting Team & Partnership Staff

Partners for Impact and Community Voice Consulting together, designed and led Phases I and II of this project, including: research, data collection, analysis, reporting, gathering and incorporating feedback, developing the documentary film, leading Community Conversations, synthesizing content, and the writing of this report. Consultants worked collaboratively with a team of staff from the Partnership and other consultants throughout the project. The full team assisted with planning and logistics; connecting to local community resources; providing context, history and insight; facilitation and project management; meeting support; content review; and continuous feedback. Additional consultants supporting this project include: Hilary Pollan Facilitation (meeting facilitation, project management, survey and interview participant recruitment, language equity support) and Renee Paschal Consulting (Phase III lead). See **Appendix C** for a list of all team and staffmembers who participated in this project.

The Advisory Committee

Even before the selection of the consultants team, an Advisory Committee was formed and charged with providing strategic guidance during Phase I (community needs assessment) and Phase II (community engagement). This committee meets regularly with the consultants and the Partnership staff. For a list of the Advisory Committee members, go to **Appendix C**.

The Community Collaborative

Participatory feedback and input during this project was provided by the Community Collaborative, an extensive group of human service providers; representatives from nonprofits; local government; faith communities; public schools and the community college; health and mental health providers; and funders. Participant’s knowledge of Chatham County and deep relationships with kids and families in the community has helped us make sure we include representation of a wide range of Chatham voices in our assessment and planning. The Collaborative has met three times: November 17, 2022; April 6, 2023; and August 17, 2023. Many participants attended multiple or all sessions. For a list of the Community Collaborative attendees, see **Appendix C**.



Phase I Methodology

Secondary Data

Extensive secondary research was conducted to illustrate the community of Chatham County, population and demographics, and area growth. Supporting evidence from research, state, and national entities provides back up to many of the learnings that emerged from primary data collection and help to better describe health, family and early educational challenges. The complete list of sources and links from this report may be found in **Appendix B**.

Surveys

Two surveys were conducted, one with providers of child care (facility directors or owners) and another with parents and other caregivers (adults with primary responsibility for young children in the home). For the ease of this report, we reference survey participants as “providers” and “parents.” The survey instruments may be found in **Appendices D and E**. Survey data was collected from April through June, 2023. Two child care centers have closed and two have opened between the time of data collection and the writing of this report. The results represented here, however, reflect responses from the time of survey completion.

Providers of Child Care (facility directors or owners)

Partners for Impact consultants designed the survey instrument with feedback from the Partnership staff, other consultants, and the Advisory Committee. The Partnership staff conducted the surveys through phone interviews and site visits with private child care providers. Given the nature of child care environments and shortages of staff, directors were often supporting classrooms and did not have time to complete the full survey in one session. Twenty-nine (71%) out of 41 child care facilities in Chatham County responded to the survey. \$25 gift cards were provided as incentives for participating providers and each child care facility that participated was entered into a drawing for a \$250 give card. A strong commitment of staff time ensured this response rate and full completion of surveys. This data collection methodology served not only to meet the core data needs for this study, it also provided accurate and up to date information for the WorkLife Systems (WLS) used by the Partnership for Child Care Resource and Referral. Limitations of this survey: only private providers were interviewed. Therefore public school NC Pre-K, HeadStart and Early HeadStart are not represented, however they participated in a focus group.

Parents (or other adults with primary responsibility for young children)

Partners for Impact consultants designed the survey instrument with input and feedback from the Partnership staff, other consultants, and the Advisory Committee. Surveys were translated into Spanish and available electronically in both languages through the Chatham Kids Matter website. Surveys in both languages could be completed electronically, in hard copy, or by phone. A distribution plan was designed with dependence on Community Collaborative members' support in helping with distribution through sharing and posting flyers, handing out postcards, and encouraging community members, clients, friends, and neighbors to complete the survey. There was an article in the Chatham News & Record helping to promote the survey and child care providers assisted in promoting it with the families of enrolled children. Incentives were provided through a drawing at the close of the survey. An incentive drawing for \$25 gift cards supported increasing response rates. Limitations of this survey: the total number of responses and the number of responses across subcategories of demographics did not adequately represent the population of Chatham County to generalize to the total population of children or to any specific demographic.

The total number of children under age six represented among all surveys:

- Out of 208 valid surveys¹, 326 children were represented
- 295 children were represented by surveys that were completed or mostly completed
- Of those 295 children, 287 were under age six. The demographics of this group are described below.

¹Fifty-two surveys were invalid because they had no data or no children under age 6 represented.

Age of Child	Count	%
Birth-12 months	48	16.7%
13-24 months	40	13.9%
2 years	45	15.7%
3 years	42	14.6%
4 years	53	18.5%
5 years IN Kindergarten	22	7.7%
5 years NOT in Kindergarten	37	12.9%
TOTAL	287	100.0%

Table 1. Parent Survey: Child Age Breakdown

Race of Child	Count	%
American Indian or Alaska Native	3	1.0%
Asian	4	1.4%
Black/African-American	19	6.6%
Native Hawaiian/Pac Islander	0	0.0%
White	147	51.2%
Other	34	11.8%
Blank	80	27.9%
TOTAL	287	100.0%

Table 2. Parent Survey: Child Race Breakdown

Hispanic?	Count	%
No	140	48.8%
Yes	59	20.6%
(blank)	88	30.7%
GRAND TOTAL	287	

Table 3. Parent Survey: Child Ethnicity

Focus groups

Deeper discussion about early childhood issues occurred in four focus groups convened for parents and child care providers. Using survey results to define groups with low response rates or otherwise underrepresented, four targeted groups of stakeholders were invited to participate in focus groups: parents who utilize informal rather than formal child care, Hispanic/Latinx parents, private centers that once offered NC Pre-K and then discontinued, and entities that currently offer NC Pre-K (public and private). Participants were each given a \$100 gift card as an incentive. The focus group and interview questions may be found in **Appendix F**.

Parents who are not using child care

This group gathered on May 25, 2023. There were seven attendees. Having received survey results about the reasons some parents prefer to care for their children under age five at home, the main purpose of this focus group was to dig deeper and to understand the unique perspectives of parents who were choosing not to use formal child care options.

Hispanic/Latinx parents

A group of 12 gathered on June 1, 2023. The purpose was to have a discussion about the challenges and opportunities for early childhood care and education in Chatham County from the unique perspective of Hispanic/Latinx parents.

Centers no longer offering NC Pre-K

On February 28, 2023, a conversation was held with two directors of centers that previously offered NC Pre-K but no longer offer it; they discussed why they made the decision to discontinue. An additional interview was held with a third provider who discontinued NC Pre-K offering.

Centers and public school providers who are currently providing NC Pre-K

On March 2, 2023, four NC Pre-K providers met, including representatives from Chatham Public Schools, Chatham County Telamon Head Start, and a private child care provider, Children First Learning Center. The discussion focused on the challenges and opportunities of NC Pre-K.

Interviews

Throughout Phase I, there were interviews with individuals who provided information, advice, feedback, and critical input for this study. The interviews included:

- Child Care Center Director to discuss NC Pre-K as well as the unique challenges for Hispanic/Latinx families
- Chatham Department of Social Services staff for further information about the Child Care Subsidy Program
- Chatham County Schools' accountability team to better understand Kindergarten readiness and third grade reading data
- Chatham County Government staff to better understand growth and housing dynamics
- Chatham County Economic Development Corporation staff to obtain more information about growth
- YMCA to better understand after school options for NC Pre-K students

Survey respondents and parent focus group participants in Phase I research took part confidentially. For a full list of other contributors, see **Appendix C**.



Phase II Methodology

Phase II was completed using the Community Voice Method², a proven mixed-method approach to participatory research and stakeholder engagement. The phases of the Community Voice approach include

- 1) video recorded stakeholder interviews,
- 2) production of a film presenting interviewee views,
- 3) screening the film at facilitated public meetings

where community members recommend action steps. Each phase is described below.

Interviews

Twenty-four video recorded interviews were conducted with stakeholders representing a wide range of views on early childhood issues in Chatham County. Interviewees were identified through snowball sampling (peer referral) and selected using purposive sampling in order to ensure diverse representation. Three primary categories of stakeholders were interviewed: parents of young children (12), child care providers (7), and resource providers or organizational leaders whose work is relevant to young children and their families (5). Each recorded interview participant was provided a \$250 incentive gift card. The interviewees are individually acknowledged in Appendix C.

During the semi-structured interviews, interviewees were asked for their perspectives on living, working, and parenting in Chatham. Parents and providers were asked about their respective experiences of child care. Interviewees were also asked to assess the early childhood and family resources that are or are not available in the county. Finally, they were asked to envision how Chatham County could be the best possible place for young children to grow and learn.

Film

The interviews were transcribed, then thematically coded and analyzed in order to identify prevalent themes and perspectives. Excerpts from the interviews were then edited together into a film that presented the results of the foregoing analysis.

Community Conversations

During August and September 2023, the Chatham Kids Matter team hosted a series of five Community Conversations: deliberative community meetings in which Chatham stakeholders were invited to view a presentation of Phase I results, watch the film, and then express their own views through facilitated small group discussions. The first Conversation

²For a review of other Community Voice Method projects, see Cumming et al. 2021

was held with the members of the Chatham Kids Matter Community Collaborative; the next four were open to the public. In order to facilitate participation, the first three Conversations were held at different locations across the county and the final was virtual; both child care and a meal were provided for in person sessions. Each session held an incentive drawing for participants for a \$250 gift card.

After viewing the presentation and film, Conversation participants gathered in small groups around tables. Facilitators invited them to respond to the data and perspectives they had just heard. Then the participants were asked to brainstorm strategies the county could take to best support young children and their families. Each small group discussed these strategies, agreeing on a few shared recommendations that they then presented to the full meeting. The consultant team aggregated the recommendations from across all the Conversations in order to identify the top priorities of stakeholders countywide; those priorities are presented in this report.



INTERVIEW: DELFINO BENITEZ

GUIDING FRAMEWORKS & PRINCIPLES

The consulting team, Advisory Committee, and Partnership staff considered the state's Early Childhood Action Plan and a set of Equity Principles to guide our work.

Early Childhood Action Plan Framework

The North Carolina Early Childhood Action Plan, initiated by Gov. Roy Cooper in 2018 and developed through the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services outlines a cohesive vision, sets benchmarks for impact by the year 2025, and establishes shared stakeholder accountability to achieve statewide goals for young children from birth through age eight.³

The plan centers on three themes: that North Carolina's **young children are 1) healthy, 2) grow up safe and nurtured, and 3) are learning and ready to succeed.**

The plan provides a framework for galvanizing coordinated action across public and private stakeholders throughout North Carolina and centers around making measurable changes in early childhood outcomes. It includes 10 data-informed goals and will continue to grow and develop over time.

The consultants, advisors and staff of the Partnership explored this state plan, considered elements that were most significant for the Chatham County Early Childhood Needs Assessment, and decided to focus discovery on three elements related to the original study plan: Healthy Children, Safe and Nurturing Relationships and High Quality Early Learning. This influenced our data collection design and framing of content presented at the community conversations.

"Children who live in neighborhoods with quality early childhood education and schools, safe housing, access to healthy food, parks and playgrounds and clean air are more likely to grow into healthy, productive adults than children who don't." - Child Opportunity Index



³<https://www.ncdhhs.gov/about/department-initiatives/early-childhood/early-childhood-action-plan>

Working with an Equity Perspective

Recognizing that systemic racism is active and constant across our communities today through policies, structures, and cultural norms, the Partnership, consultants, and community partners shared a commitment to practicing the following Equity Principles. These principles were formed to guide all decisions and approaches throughout the community needs assessment and the development of the Chatham Early Childhood Action Plan. They reflect the values and approaches already used by Chatham County Partnership for Children, the consultants, and the funders of this project. As a collective team, we acknowledge that racism impacts developing children and creates the disparities that we see across the areas of study identified in this report. We recommend this infographic from Harvard University's Center on the Developing Child showing this impact.⁴

For further information about the commitment to how each principle is practiced, visit <https://www.chathamkidsmatter.org/equity-principles-and-practices>.

Equity principles:

Centering Racial Equity

- Apply a racial equity lens

Transparency

- Share data
- Disseminate results in accessible formats
- Practice shared decision-making processes

Accountability to Principals and People

- Fairly compensate participants
- Maintain confidentiality
- Honor lived experience as expertise

Equitable Access

- Promote language justice
- Promote digital inclusion
- Promote geographic inclusion

- Foster a family friendly environment

- Ensure literacy and dual-language access Inclusive Public Engagement
- Intentionally recruit study participants

- Use a participatory processes

Sharing Power with Parents and Community

- Engage in shared leadership and decision making
- Offer deliberative community listening sessions
- Be grounded in the voices of community members

Thinking and Working at Multiple Levels

- Think at the systems-level
- Disaggregate data by race/ethnicity
- Strategize structural interventions

⁴<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/racism-and-eecd/>

COMMUNITY CONTEXT - ABOUT CHATHAM COUNTY

The challenges and opportunities experienced by parents of young children and by early childhood service providers of various kinds, and of young children themselves cannot be examined outside of the context of the whole community: demographics, economics, job opportunities, housing, growth, etc. The elements of a community system are interrelated with positive and negative causes and effects as variables change. Chatham County is growing significantly in the North and East as neighboring metropolitan residential developments expand into the county. This creates changing dynamics in these areas and widens the divide between these growing areas and the traditional rural areas in the West and South. Therefore, where a child lives in the county affects the resources and opportunities they have available to them.



Demographics

In examining the context of Chatham County, it is necessary to use multiple secondary sources to show demographics and other data segmented in different useful ways. However, with multiple sources, it is impossible to make true comparisons. In this subsection on demographics and in other subsections below, the US Census is a primary data source, although a secondary source is often cited for providing analysis of the primary data in a way that adds insight but can not be directly compared with the US Census Quick Facts that are used in other places.

According to US Census Quick Facts, Chatham County has 3,514 young children under age five. This is 4.4% of the total population of 79,864.

Total Population: 79,864	U. S. Census Bureau Quick Facts Population Estimates, July 1, 2022, (V2022)
Percent of Total Population	Age and Sex
4.4%	Persons under 5 years (3,514 children)
19.3%	Persons under 18 years
25.3%	Persons 65 years and over
51.6%	Female persons
	Race
2.4%	Asian alone
1.3%	American Indian and Alaska Native alone
12.0%	Black or African American alone
0.2%	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone
2.0%	Two or More Races
82.2%	White alone
	Hispanic Origin
12.2%	Hispanic or Latino (any race)

Table 4. Chatham County Population Demographics

The chart below, from KidsCount 2021, shows a higher percentage of children identified with Hispanic ethnicity. There could be multiple reasons for only 12% of the total population having Hispanic origin in one report and 24% of children in another report. There could be an actual increase in the child Hispanic population. There could also be an under counting of the adults in the total population. One possible explanation is that children born in the US have no negative consequences to being counted in the census; however adults who are not citizens may not participate in the census and therefore be underrepresented. The Urban Institute predicted an estimated 3.09% undercount of Hispanic residents and a 3.88% undercount of people in households with at least one non-citizen resident.

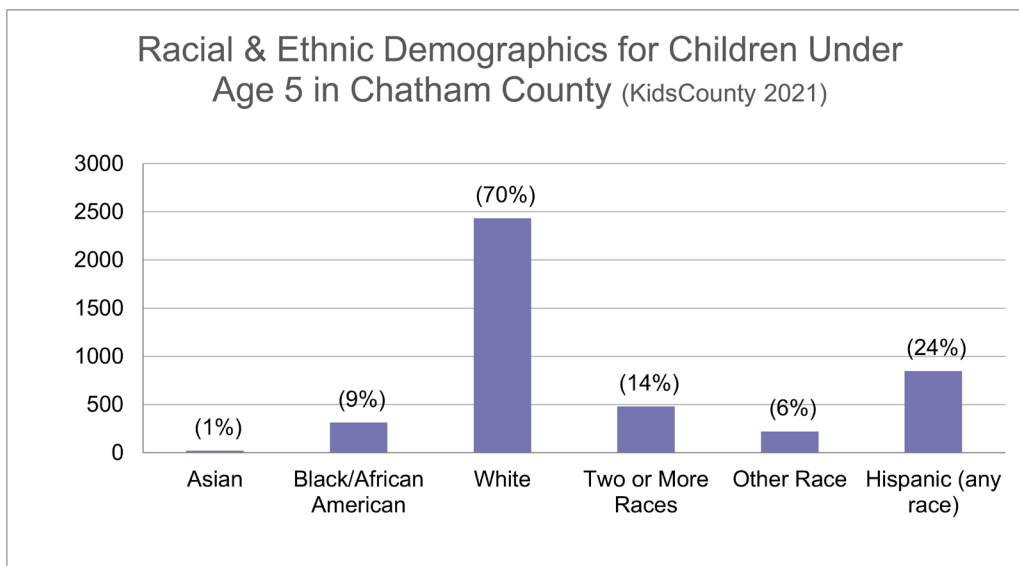
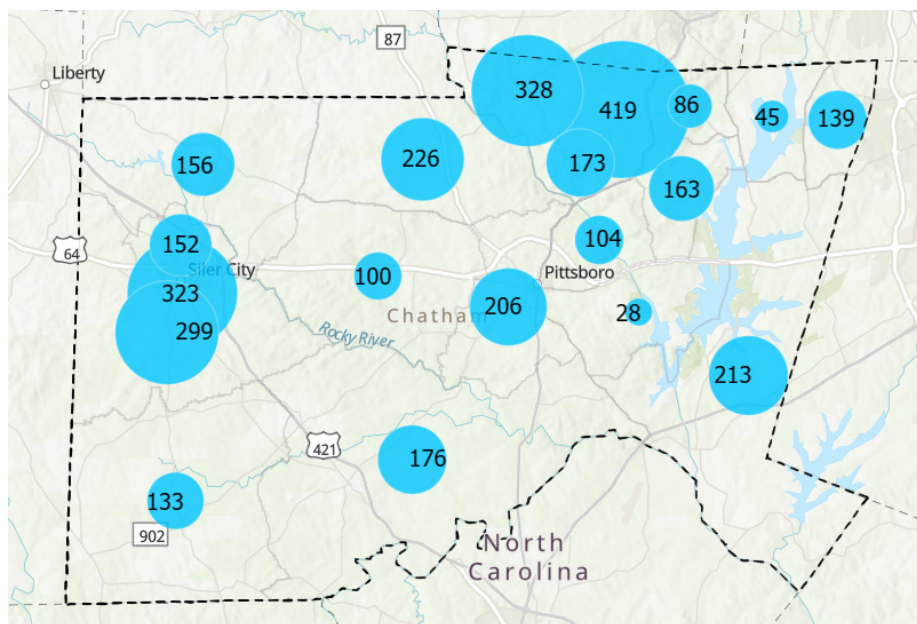


Chart 1. Chatham County Young Child Racial Breakdown

These two areas with the highest child population in the county also have the greatest divide in wealth with the Northeastern tracts at the highest wealth and Siler City the lowest.

The map below shows the distribution of young children (0-5) throughout Chatham County by census tract. The largest child population areas are in the Northeastern section of the county where Chapel Hill is expanding southward and in the Siler City area where there was a two percent decline in growth from 2010 to 2020. These two areas with the highest child population in the county also



Graphic 1. Chatham County Map of Where Young Children Live

have the greatest divide in wealth with the Northeastern tracts at the highest wealth and Siler City the lowest.

Income, Poverty and Vulnerability

The 2022 Living Income Standard (LIS) strives to capture how much income a working family with children needs to afford basic expenses. The LIS uses actual cost data to approximate how much money is required for four representative family types to pay eight basic types of expenses: 1) housing, 2) food, 3) child care, 4) health care, 5) transportation, 6) other necessities, 7) taxes, and 8) consumer debt payments. The Annual LIS for a household with one adult and one child in Chatham County was \$61,260 in 2022. In comparison, the LIS for a family of four in Chatham County is \$82,120. Similarly, the US Census reports the Median Household income for Chatham County at \$82,764, while US Housing and Urban Development (HUD) documents the Area Median Income for a family of four in the Durham-Chapel Hill Metro Area, including Chatham, as \$95,500. These are all slightly different yet complementary ways of looking at the income levels for a community.

Using the federal minimum wage (\$7.25/hour), which is the same for North Carolina’s minimum wage, it would take 162 hours per week of work to reach the Living Income Standard for Chatham County. This is only six hours short of having to work 24 hours per day for seven days per week.

Using the federal minimum wage (\$7.25/hour), which is the same for North Carolina’s minimum wage, it would take 162 hours per week of work to reach the Living Income Standard for Chatham County.

	Annual Income	Monthly Income
One Adult/One Child		
Federal Minimum Wage	\$15,080	\$1,257
Federal Poverty Level ⁵	\$18,310	\$1,526
Chatham Living Income Standard	\$61,260	\$5,105
NC Living Income Standard	\$50,530	\$4,211
Number of weekly hours at minimum wage per month to earn Chatham LIS: 162		

Table 5. Chatham County Family Income Measures for a Household of Two

⁵The federal poverty level (FPL) is commonly used to refer to the federal poverty guidelines that the US Department of Health and Human Services issues each year. It’s specified as an income amount that is used to determine eligibility for various income-based public programs, such as Medicaid, health insurance premium tax credits, and cost-sharing reductions.

According to the Annie E Casey Foundation Kids Count report, in Chatham County, the median household income has increased by almost 50% from 2010 to 2021, from \$55,371 to \$82,764, surpassing even Orange and Durham counties.

Median Household Income in the Region 2021	
NC	\$61,997
Alamance	\$58,847
Chatham	\$82,764
Durham	\$71,436
Orange	\$79,814
Wake	\$91,558

Table 6. Median Household Income for Chatham and Surrounding Counties

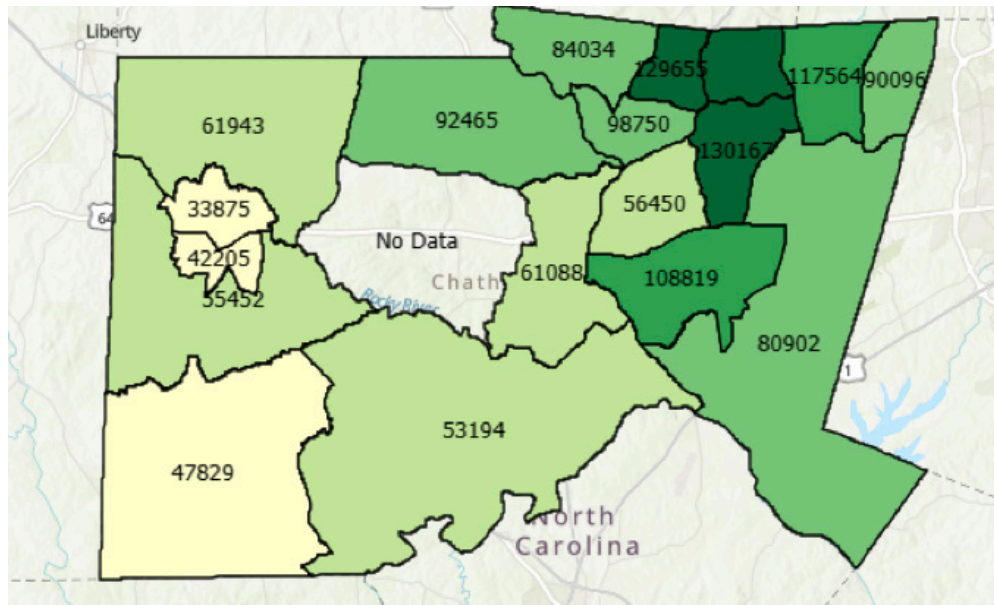
Migration into and out of Chatham County accounts, in part, for the overall increase in median household income. This can be seen by looking at the average adjusted gross income of people entering and leaving the county. Average incomes are higher for those moving into the county than for those moving out. Even people moving out of the county tend to have a higher income than the median income. This indicates people with lower incomes are less likely to be moving while the overall median household income still continues to grow.



Graphic 2. Chatham County Migration

The map below shows the median household income by census tracts in Chatham County with darker green indicating highest median household income in the Northeastern area of the county (\$130,167) and yellow indicating the lowest median household income in the Siler City region (\$33,875). As noted above, these two areas also represent where the largest numbers of children from birth to five live in the county.

The widening gap between high wealth in the growing areas of the county and low wealth in areas that are not seeing growth, directly affects the distribution of resources from grocery stores and child care centers to health services, parks, and playgrounds. Unequal distribution of resources results in unequal access to these same resources. The unequal distribution of wealth and resources across the county disproportionately impacts people of color. A close look at the population in Siler City shows 52.9% of the residents are Hispanic, and 18% are Black. This compares to 12.2% Hispanic and 12.0% Black in Chatham County overall.



Graphic 3. Chatham County Median Income by Census Tract

A disaggregated look at median household income also tells a story of racial economic disparities. The average income for African American households is 53.5% lower, and Hispanic households (any race) are 44% lower than for White households. (Jan 2023)

The average income for African American households is 53.5% lower, and Hispanic households (any race) are 44% lower than for White households.

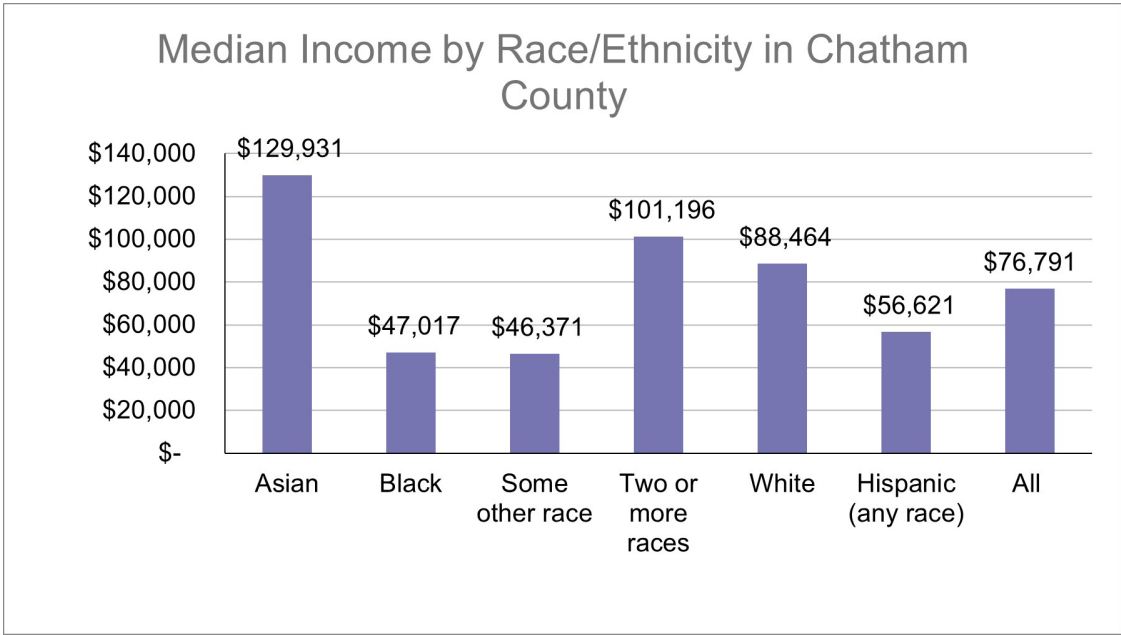


Chart 2. Chatham County Median Household Income by Race

From 2010 to 2020, the number of people in poverty in Chatham County decreased, then rose again in 2021 to 9,444, 6% higher than in 2010. With the same pattern of decreasing from 2010 to 2020 and increasing in 2021, the percentage of the population (red line in the chart below) actually remained 2% lower than in 2010 as total population numbers have increased. The reduction in 2020 was likely impacted by COVID pandemic relief efforts which is known to have reduced child poverty across the country. The higher number but lower percentage in 2021 shows how an overall population increase at higher income levels can hide poverty that is also increasing but at a slower rate.

an overall population increase at higher income levels can hide poverty that is also increasing but at a slower rate.

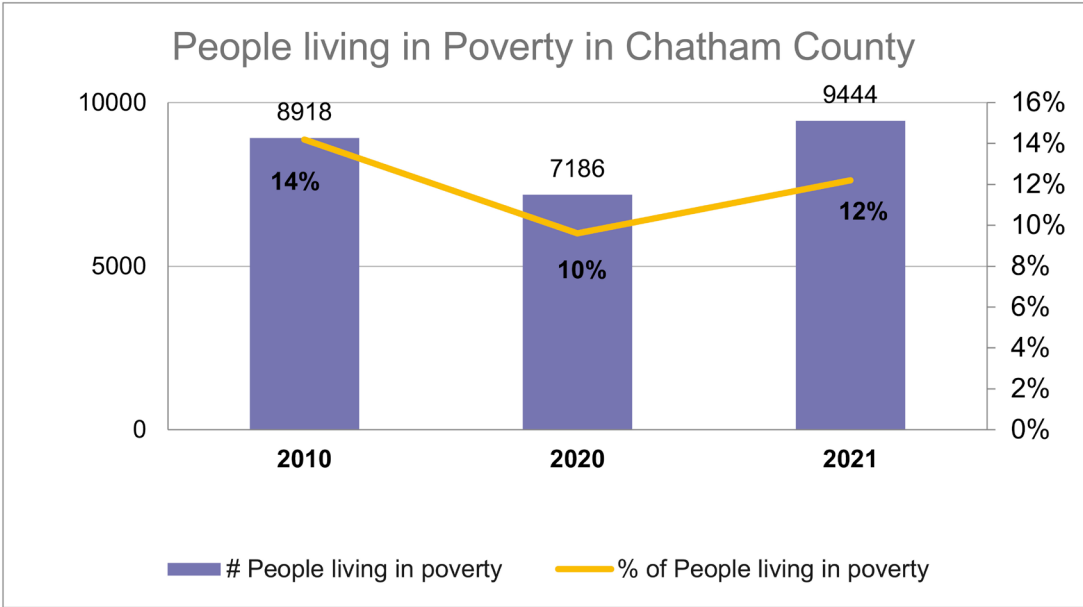


Chart 3. Chatham County Number and Percentage of Households Living in Poverty form 2010 - 2021

Noted in the table below, the percentage of children under age five living below the poverty level in Chatham County has decreased from 2017 to 2021, dipping below the state average. As noted above, COVID relief funding which is no longer in effect, likely impacted this trend as did migration. It may also suggest an aging population of people living below the poverty level.

Children under age 5 in poverty					
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
NC	140,866 (23.7%)	146,941 (24.7%)	141,716 (23.8%)	131,206 (22.1%)	124,073 (21.3%)
Chatham	1,097 (25.3%)	807 (23.4%)	673 (19.7%)	679 (19.7%)	618 (18.1%)

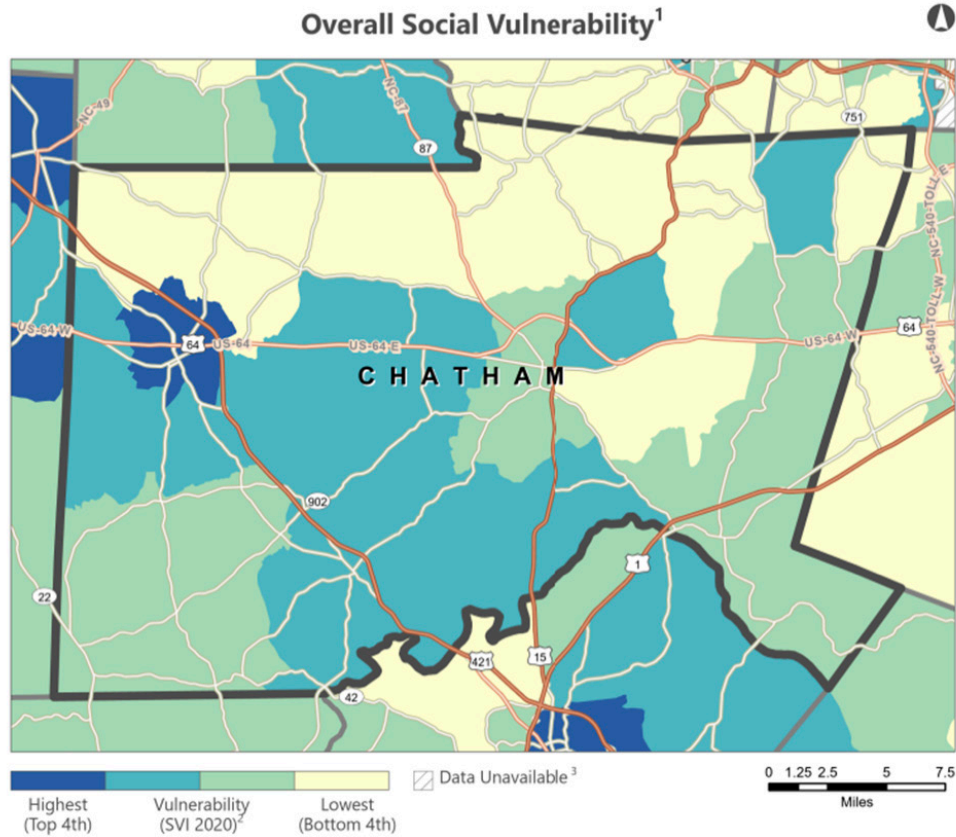
Table 7. North Carolina and Chatham County Number and Percentage of Young Children Living in Poverty from 2017 to 2021.

Social Vulnerability Index

The Center for Disease Control uses the Social Vulnerability Index, measured within census tracts using census and American Community Survey data to identify areas that are most vulnerable to natural disasters. This Social Vulnerability Index has 16 Measures in four themed areas:

- Socioeconomic status - 150% below poverty level, unemployment, housing cost burdened, less than high school diploma, no health insurance
- Household characteristics - 65+, 17-, disability, single parent, English proficiency
- Racial/ethnic status
- Housing/ transportation - multi-unit home, mobile home, crowding, no vehicle, group living

Dark blue areas indicate higher vulnerability around Siler City and covering a rural area of the county from West to South. Yellow areas indicate the lowest vulnerability across the top, bordering Orange County and wrapping around the eastern side of Pittsboro.



Graphic 4. Chatham County Social Vulnerability Index by Census Tract
Source: Center for Disease Control

National studies show that mothers between the ages of 25-54 with children under age 13 experienced the largest losses in employment during the pandemic and did not see recovery to pre-pandemic levels until the latter part of 2022. This analysis also shows that mothers and fathers report disruption in child care as a reason for missing work at a higher rate in 2022 than in pre-pandemic 2019.

Employment

Understanding the household economics about families in Chatham County requires a look at unemployment rates and employment opportunities for parents. National studies show that mothers between the ages of 25-54 with children under age 13 experienced the largest losses in employment during the pandemic and did not see recovery to pre-pandemic levels until the latter part of 2022. This analysis also shows that mothers and fathers report disruption in child care as a reason for missing work at a higher rate in 2022 than in pre-pandemic 2019.

The unemployment rate in Chatham County decreased from 7.4% in 2012 to 3.0% in 2023. These numbers are based on the civilian labor force, total percent of population age 16 years and older (57.8% of the population).

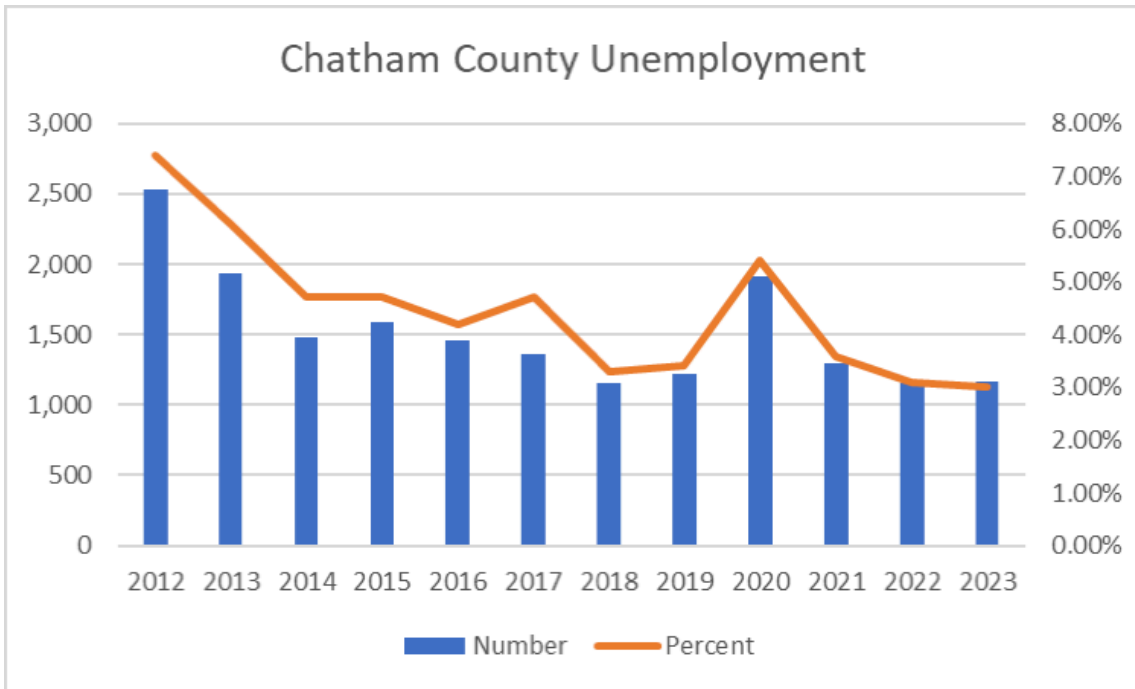


Chart 4. Chatham County Unemployment Number and Rate from 2012 to 2023

The US Census reported 1,581 employer establishments in 2021 in Chatham County and 15,502 total number of individuals employed. Recognizing that the COVID pandemic deeply affected employment, there was a 2.4% decrease in employment numbers from the 2020 to 2021 year. Although, as noted above, unemployment rates have decreased steadily since 2020.

The chart below shows employment levels by industry type in Chatham County in 2022. The top four industries for employment typically employ a large number of lower wage workers (health care and social assistance, retail, food service, educational service).

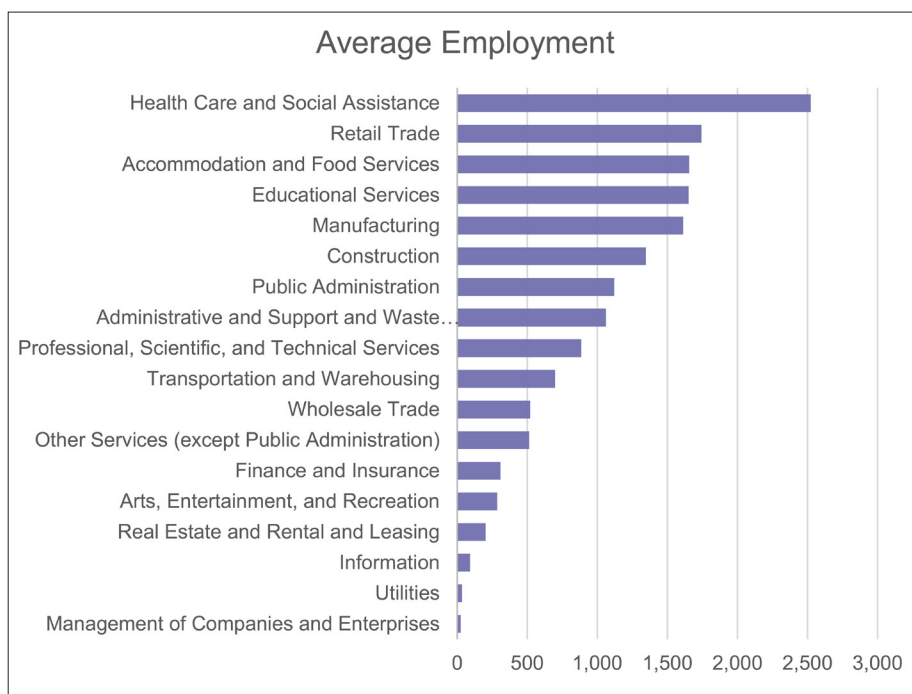


Chart 5. Chatham County Industries by with Average Number of Employees

Anticipated Growth

Population growth

The percentage of population growth in Chatham County has remained well above the North Carolina growth rate and holding a solid mid range among neighboring counties since 2010. From 2020 to 2022, Chatham County growth was slightly higher than in peer counties. Long term growth estimates show Chatham County at around 127,405 by the year 2060.

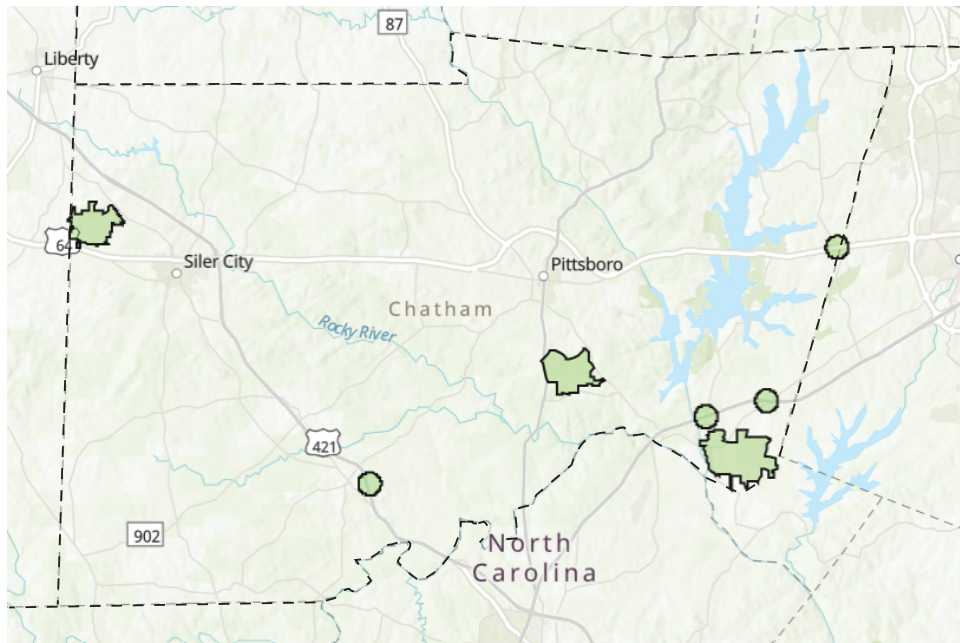
County	Numerical Population Growth by Year		Percent of Population Growth over 10-year Period	Numerical Population Growth by Year	Numerical Population Growth by Year	Percentage of Population Growth
	2010	2020	2010 - 2020	2021	2022	2020 - 2022
Wake	850,546	1,091,662	28.35%	1,112,883	1,175,021	7.64%
Durham	258,578	317,665	22.85%	320,146	332,680	4.73%
Chatham	61,426	72,853	18.60%	75,070	79,864	9.62%
Alamance	147,072	166,144	12.97%	169,185	176,353	6.14%
Orange	129,562	146,354	12.96%	147,376	150,477	2.82%
North Carolina	9,271,178	10,386,227	12.03%	10,367,022	10,698,973	3.01%

Table 8. Population Growth Statistics for Chatham and Surrounding Counties

Projected population estimates from the NC State Demographer’s Office show growth for children under age five in Chatham County at a rate of 15.07% over the next five years and for total population, a growth rate of 8.93%.

Employment Growth

According to the Chatham County Comprehensive Plan, the mapped employment centers below are areas targeted for future job-generating uses in settings that meet workplace expectations. These could be used for industrial, office, retail, restaurant, service, recreation, and other uses.



Graphic 5. Chatham County Employment Centers

Wolfspeed, anticipating 1,800 employees will be located in the Chatham-Siler City Advanced Manufacturing Site, just west of Siler City. VinFast, anticipating 7,500 employees, will be just south of US 1 in Moncure. Both of these manufacturers have gained significant publicity for the growth impact they will have on Chatham County. In addition to the added employees each company will bring to Chatham and neighboring counties, there is also significant growth expectation associated with other industries that will support product development at Wolfspeed and Vinfast as well as service and retail businesses that will form around growing neighborhoods creating exponential growth from these two companies.

According to Chatham Economic Development Corporation, "Two projects that have flown under the radar are FedEx Distribution at the Triangle Innovation Point site in Moncure and a Coca-Cola facility located in the Apex Gateway Park. FedEx will hire 300 new employees and Coca-Cola will bring 200 employees to Chatham County. Expansion projects are also underway at Arauco (Moncure) and Gaines Oil (Goldston). Those companies are adding approximately 50 new employees to their existing workforce. Moving forward, growth is anticipated in supplemental industries to these new industries in their respective fields. This consists mostly of component manufacturers of electric vehicles and semiconductors. Accessible and affordable child care will be needed to accommodate this growth."



Housing Affordability

Using the Living Income Standard of \$61,260, the cost of child care represents 27% of that budget and the cost of housing is 23%. Combined, housing and child care make up 50% of this household budget. Forty-seven percent of all renters in Chatham County (2,576 households) and 20% of homeowners (4,775 households) have difficulty affording their home.⁶ Based on the American Community Survey and officials from Chatham County, 3,777 units of affordable rental housing are needed to meet current demands. According to HUD, an income of \$52,600 per year is needed to afford the Fair Market Rent of \$1,315 in Chatham County. This makes fair market rent unaffordable for many service workers.

Here are some local average annual salaries:

Healthcare	\$34,670
Child Care	\$26,310
Police Officer	\$51,410
Farm Labor	\$33,520

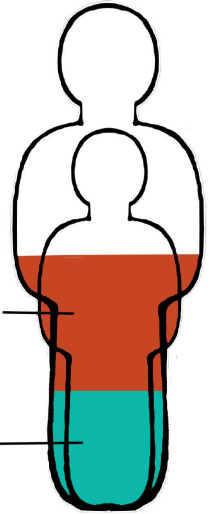
\$61,260

is the Living Income Standard for 1 adult and 1 child in Chatham County.

Of this budget:

Average childcare
27%

Average housing
23%



⁶Housing Cost Burdened or having to pay 30% or more of household income for housing cost.

Additional Data for Chatham County

As a part of this project, Partners for Impact worked with Chatham County government to add an Early Childhood Data segment to their county level GIS mapping which is used for county planning and offers local access to this county specific data. Results can be found here (<https://arcg.is/1nb01D>) including:

- population of children under age five
- children under the federal poverty level
- children in food deserts
- median household income
- adults with less than high school diploma
- adults with college degrees
- uninsured children under age 19
- households with no vehicle access
- households with no internet
- deprivation index
- social vulnerability index
- economic mobility index
- community adversity index
- community resilience estimate
- employment centers
- town centers
- community centers
- child care centers
- demographics

Only 55.9% of children between birth and 15 months old who utilize Medicaid or Health Choice are attending their well child health visits.

Healthy Children

High rates of infants are not getting their well child care visits

Only 55.9% of children between birth and 15 months old who utilize Medicaid or Health Choice are attending their well child health visits. That is significantly less than children of this age range across the state (NC rate: 62.5%). Older children who utilize Medicaid or Health Choice are more likely to access well child health with 73% of three to six year olds getting adequate care (NC rate: 69.9%). During these early life, well child health visits, children are screened for developmental delays; hearing, vision and oral health issues; and other health risk factors. In addition, moms receive postpartum depression screenings and parents are provided with health education specific to the needs of their child.

In 2020, the percentage of uninsured population of children under age 19 in Chatham County was the same as it was in 2014 (7.10%) which came down from 9.4% in 2012. The number of children enrolled in Medicaid or Health Choice has increased by 10% over this nine year period. In 2021, this enrollment made up approximately 46% of the population of children under 19 in Chatham County.

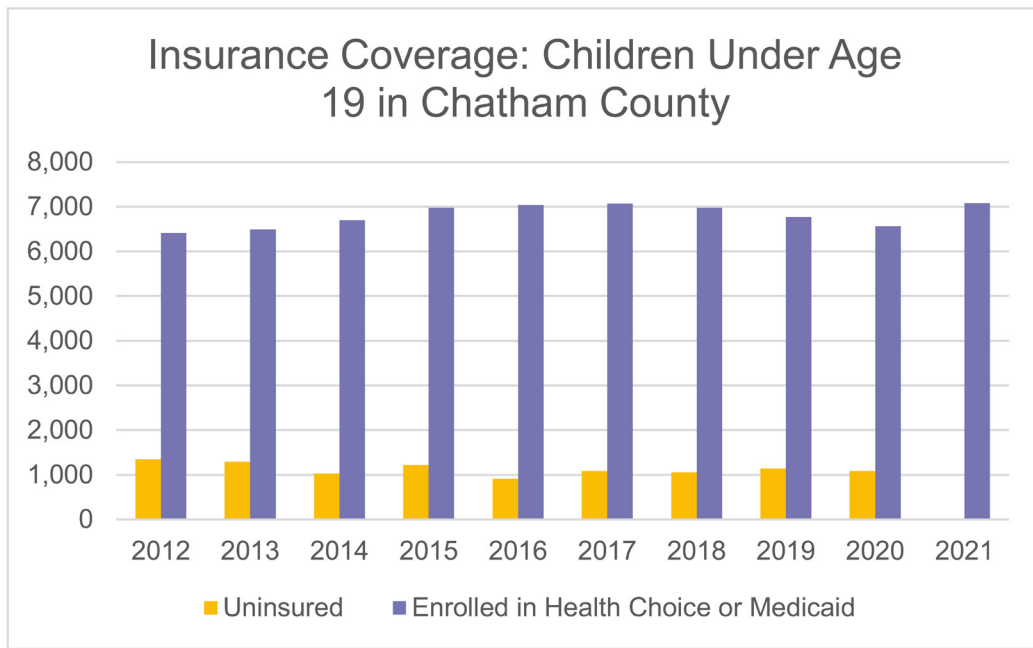


Chart 6. Chatham County Children who are Uninsured or are Enrolled in Medicaid/Health Choice from 2012 to 2021

in 2021, fewer children were receiving early intervention services for ages birth to three, than any previous time in the last 10 years in Chatham County.

Low numbers of children receiving early intervention services

As delays or disabilities are discovered, access to early intervention is one of the strongest precursors to building Kindergarten readiness. However, in 2021, fewer children were receiving early intervention services for ages birth to three, than any previous time in the last 10 years in Chatham County. This was likely in part due to the COVID pandemic, however, the impact will carry forward as children enter Kindergarten. From 2018 to 2021 (pre-pandemic to mid-pandemic) early intervention services for children from birth to three dropped by 30.3% (from 107 children to 77 children). For children ages three to five during the same time period but measured by point in time in December, services dropped 40.8% (from 157 in December 2018 to 93 in 2021). By April 2023, this service count had risen back to 146, but still below pre-pandemic numbers.

African American infants are dying at 5.33 times the rate of White infants

Health disparities by race exceed state levels

African American infants are dying at 5.33 times the rate of White infants and Hispanic infants at 1.7 times the rate of White infants. Racial disparities are discovered when looking at the number of deaths compared to live births within a racial category. The rate is shown as # of deaths per 1,000 live births. The graph below shows these rates by African American (non-Hispanic), White (non-Hispanic) and Hispanic (regardless of race). While 2017 and 2019 data showed no African American infant deaths, 2018, 2020, and 2021 showed 29, 39.5, and 18.8 respectively, all three years rising significantly above trends for the total population, White (non-Hispanic), and Hispanic (any race) populations. Even if averaged across the five years, the rate is still well above other categories at 17.5.

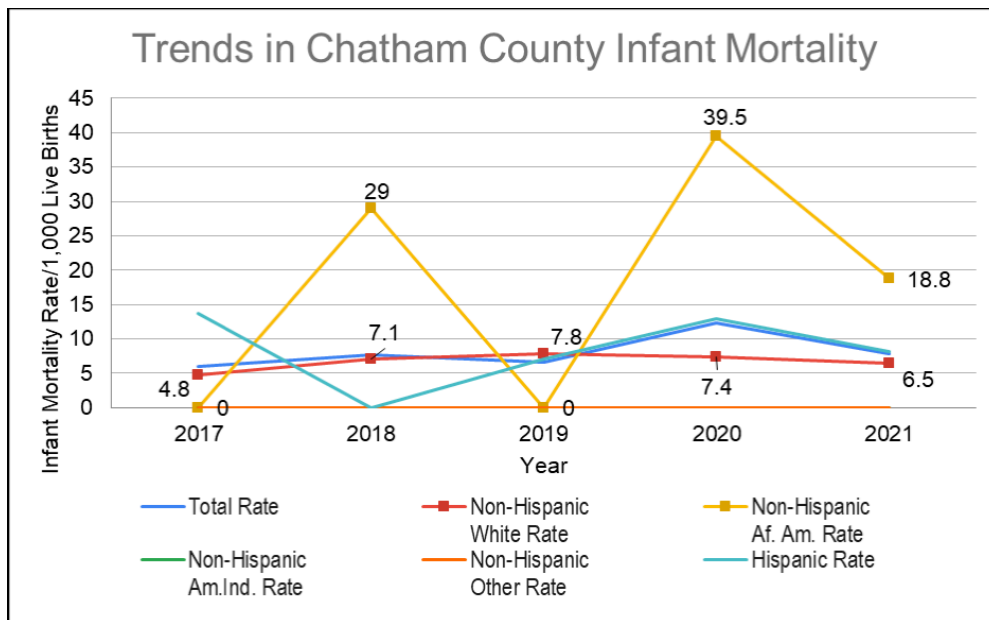


Chart 7. Chatham County Infant Mortality Rate by Race and Ethnicity from 2017 to 2021

In addition to health disparities by race and ethnicity for infant death, low and very-low birthweight rates are also higher for African American newborns (21.4%) and Hispanic/Latinx newborns (11.6%) compared to non-Hispanic White newborns (9.3%) in Chatham County.

Food insecurity

According to Feeding America (2021), 10% of children in Chatham County do not have access to enough healthy, high quality food. This is below the statewide average of 15.4%.

Child maltreatment rates are declining; length of stay in foster care remains high

From 2011 to 2020, the number of children for whom child abuse and neglect was substantiated declined by 28.4% (from 141 to 101.)

Child abuse and neglect reports investigated and substantiated in Chatham							
Location	Category	2011	2013	2015	2017	2019	2020
NC	Investigated	131,675	130,341	130,708	128,495	125,420	117,284
		51.4	51	51.2	50	48.4	45.2
	Substantiated	25,986	23,000	23,625	22,243	21,083	20,506
		10.1	9	9.3	8.7	8.1	7.9
Chatham	Investigated	598	428	494	454	463	536
		39.6	28.8	32.9	29.2	28.7	33.1
	Substantiated	141	139	137	79	106	101
		9.3	9.3	9.1	5.1	6.5	6.2

Table 9. North Carolina and Chatham County Number and Rate of Child Abuse and Neglect Reports Investigated and Substantiated

In 2020, there were 129 children under the age of 18 in the foster care system in Chatham County. It takes 2 years, 8.5 months (987 days) to move a child (age 4-5) from foster care into a permanent adoptive home. Only slightly less, 2 years 4.6 months (868 days) for children from birth to three years old. The reasons for this lengthy delay are multifaceted and can include the time it takes to work with the birth parent(s), a slow and cumbersome judicial system, and work backlogs and/or staff turnover in the Child Protective Custody agency.



COMMUNITY CONTEXT - KINDERGARTEN READINESS

Seventeen states plus the District of Columbia have defined school readiness; North Carolina is one of those states. In addition, 29 states plus the District of Columbia have an established Kindergarten Entrance Assessment. In North Carolina, this is the Early Learning Inventory (ELI). Adopted in 2018 by the North Carolina State Board of Education (KNEC-017), the ELI is completed within the first 60 days of Kindergarten to measure readiness according to five areas of child development:

- Approaches to Learning
- Cognitive Development
- Emotional-Social Development
- Physical Development
- Language Development and Communication

The NC Department of Public Instruction (DPI) offers *A Family's Guide to Kindergarten Readiness*⁷ that describes each of these five areas of development, and provides activities that families can do with their preschooler to help prepare for Kindergarten. The ELI is used for developing instruction for each child, to inform efforts in reducing the achievement gap, and improving the early childhood system. This data is also shared in aggregate through school report cards.

There are a few challenges with the North Carolina ELI and its implementation in Chatham County. Being adopted in 2018, there was very little time to develop consistency in how the inventory is implemented across the state prior to the COVID pandemic. This makes it difficult to obtain full buy-in. It is often challenged as being very subjective. Because children of that age are not developmentally ready for testing, documented results require teachers' discernment in observing and recording responses. "*Restart schools*"⁸ are exempt from implementing the ELI and are not required to adopt an alternate method (similar to Charter Schools). This makes it difficult to get a comprehensive understanding of kindergarten readiness for all areas of the county. In Chatham County, Siler City Elementary and Virginia Cross Elementary are Restart schools, and therefore have no ELI data for 2022.

⁷<https://www.dpi.nc.gov/documents/publications/catalog/el101-lets-get-ready-bw-version/open>

⁸Restart is one of four school reform models in NC, but is the only model currently in use. A Restart school is a school in which the State Board of Education has authorized the local board of education to operate the school with the same exemptions from statutes and rules as a charter school. <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/districts-schools-support/district-and-regional-support/school-reform-models/restart-schools>

The chart below shows ELI kindergarten readiness per elementary school in Chatham County for 2019 (pre-COVID pandemic; the beginning of the assessment’s implementation) compared to 2022 (post-COVID pandemic; most recent data report).

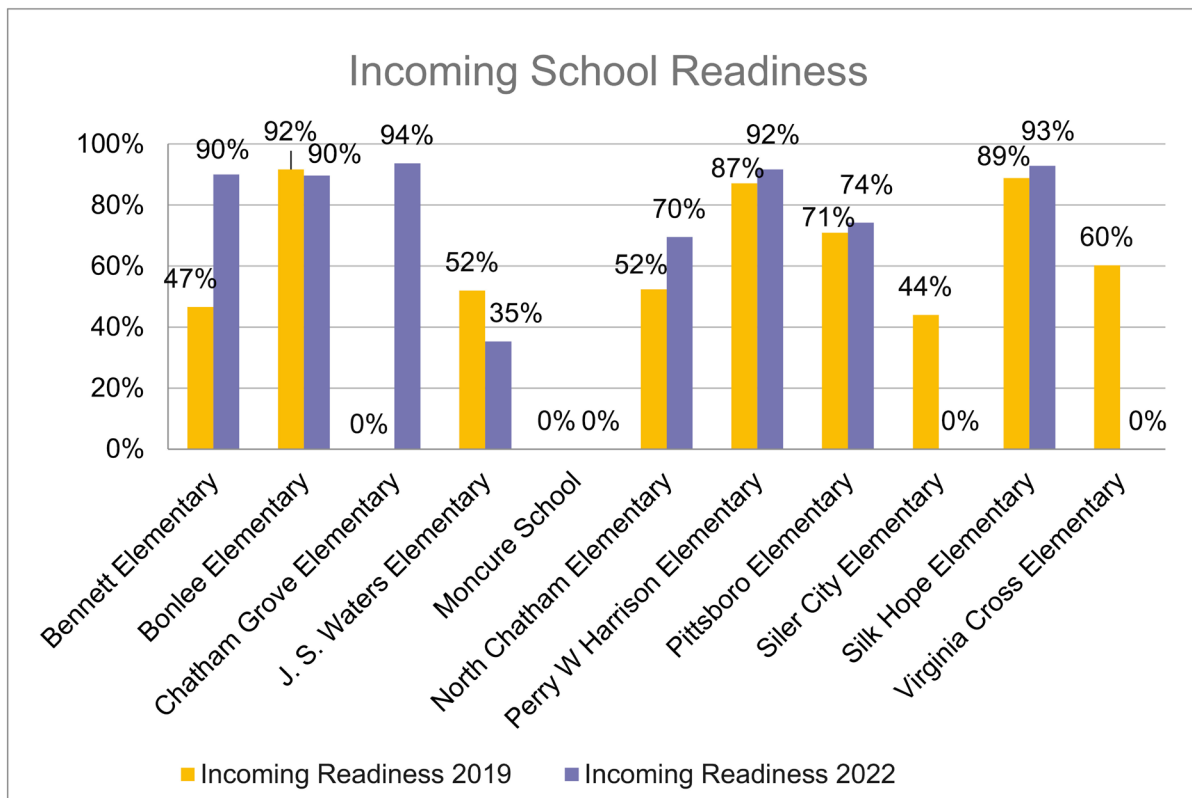
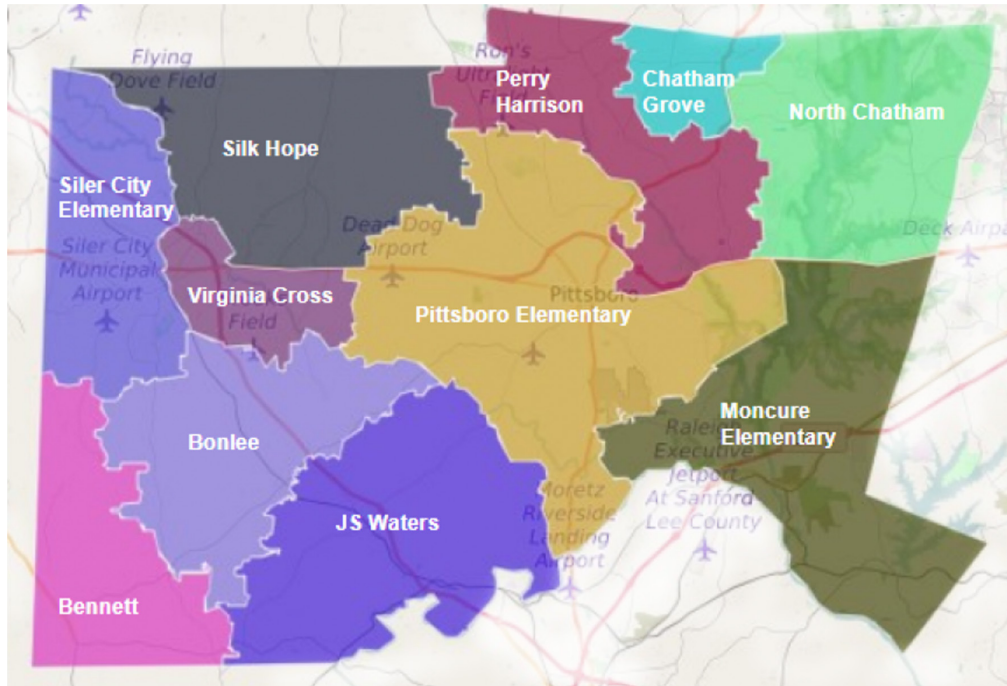


Chart 8. ELI School Readiness Scores by Chatham County Elementary School Comparing 2019 to 2022.

Seen in the chart above, there is a broad range of differences across schools in Chatham County showing the percentage of children who met the developmental readiness criteria of the ELI.

- Nine schools completed the ELI in 2022. Seven of these nine schools (78%) show school readiness scores in the 70th percentile or above and five (55%) have scores in the 90th percentile or above.
- Eight schools completed the ELI in both 2019 and 2022 for comparison. Five of these had increased scores from 2019 to 2022 and only two had a decrease. Bonlee is one of the two schools that decreased from 2019 to 2022, however they still remained in the 90th percentile for school readiness in 2022. JS Walters decreased from 52% to 35% readiness from 2019 to 2022.
- Chatham Grove Elementary opened after 2019, therefore there is no data for that year.
- Moncure held very low scores in both 2019 and 2022.⁹

⁹When numbers are very low they may not be reported due to privacy.



Graphic 6. Chatham County Elementary School Districts

It helps to take school readiness data into context with what we know of the schools and the districts that each school pulls from. Remembering the vulnerability Index from page 15, the northeastern region shows least vulnerability (Silk Hope, Perry Harrison, Chatham Grove and Northern Chatham districts) and the Siler City, western, and southern regions show the most vulnerability (Siler City, Virginia Cross, Bonlee, JS Waters and the southern part of Pittsboro and Moncure districts).

In addition, the following elementary schools have NC Pre-K classrooms:

- Bennett: 1 NC Pre-K classroom, 90th percentile for kindergarten readiness
- Chatham Gove: 1 NC Pre-K classroom, 94% percentile for kindergarten readiness
- North Chatham: 2 NC Pre-K classrooms, 70th percentile for kindergarten readiness
- Perry W Harrison: 1 NC Pre-K classroom, 92nd percentile for kindergarten readiness
- Pittsboro: 2 NC Pre-K classrooms, 74th percentile for kindergarten readiness
- Siler City: 2 NC Pre-K classrooms, exempt
- Virginia Cross: 1 NC Pre-K classroom, exempt

The remaining elementary schools do not have NC Pre-K classrooms:

- Bonlee, 90th percentile for kindergarten readiness
- JS Waters, 35th percentile for kindergarten readiness
- Moncure, no score/0% for kindergarten readiness
- Silk Hope, (previously had an NC Pre-K classroom that closed prior to COVID), 93rd percentile for kindergarten readiness.

Collectively this data indicates that the majority of the county is showing strong school readiness scores, however there are areas without data that cannot be measured and there are pockets with low scores. Schools with NC Pre-K classrooms seem more likely to have higher scores, although a direct correlation has not been determined.

the majority of the county is showing strong school readiness scores, however there are areas without data that cannot be measured and there are pockets with low scores.

Kindergarten and School Enrollment 2022

There were 606 total children enrolled in Chatham County School kindergarten classes in the fall of 2022. While a breakdown of private and homeschooled children was not available by grade level, the chart below shows the growth in enrollment over five years through 2021-22. Private and home schools combined are consistently increasing enrollment (29.4% increase from 2017-18 to 2021-22) while public school enrollment is remaining almost flat, increasing only 1.4% in the same timeframe.

School Enrollment: Private Schools, Homeschools, and Public Schools							
	Total Public School Children	Number of Private schools	Private School Children	Number of Home Schools	Homeschooled Children	Total Non-public School Children	% of all school aged children that are not attending Public School
17-18	8938	5	176	580	980	1156	11.5%
18-19	8992	4	190	592	1016	1206	11.8%
19-20	9103	5	199	648	1119	1318	12.6%
20-21	9001	5	191	815	1379	1570	14.9%
21-22	9066	7	241	752	1255	1496	14.2%

Table 10. Chatham County School Enrollment: Private, Homeschool and Public

Private and homeschools are not required to complete or report any type of kindergarten assessment. As this trend continues, it becomes more and more difficult to gather countywide data on school readiness.

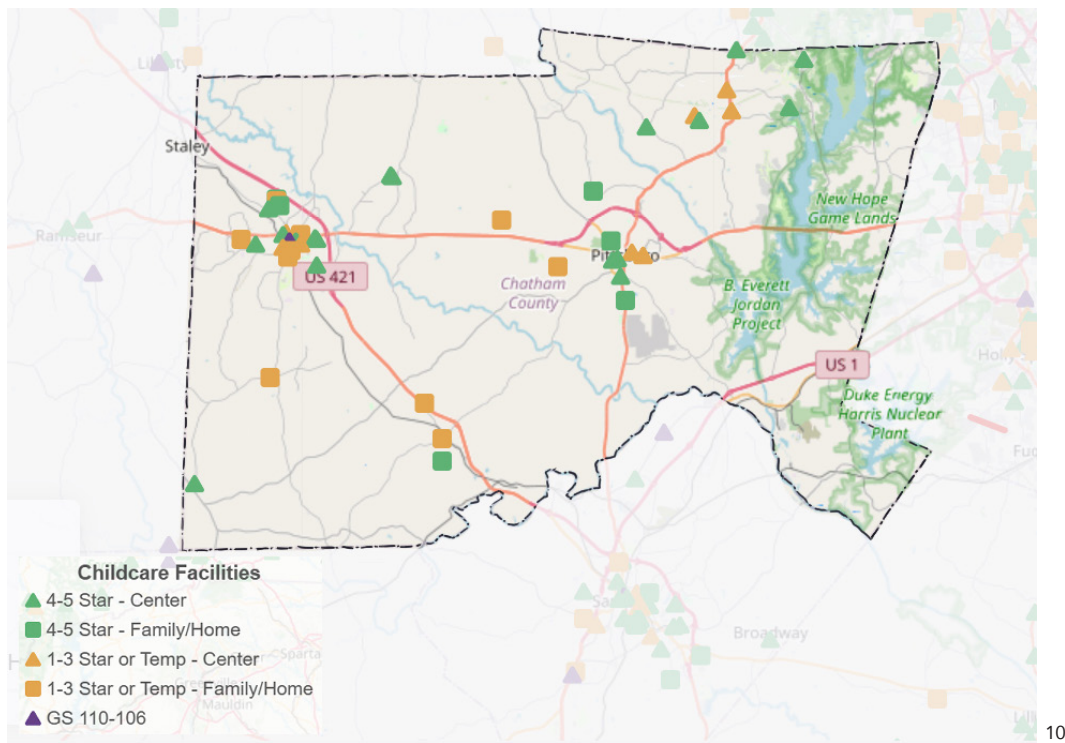
COMMUNITY CONTEXT - CHILD CARE IN CHATHAM COUNTY

The child care system is made up of various formal and informal options for how young children are cared for each day, especially when parents or guardians are otherwise unavailable due to work, school, and other obligations. Informal care is not licensed and includes the provision of care offered by parents themselves, other family members, friends, neighbors, or a hired nanny. The cost of informal care could vary from high (Nanny services) to minimal or no cost. Informal care can also be provided through a cooperative arrangement, barter, or exchange of services or support. It may be full time, part time or vary according to the family needs. Formal care refers to enrollment in a child care program that is either licensed or exempt from licensing. Formal care includes family child care homes; child care centers; part-day preschool programs; faith based (exempt) and non- faith based programs; Head Start and Early Head Start; and NC Pre-K. See **Appendix A** for more details on the child care system.



There are 41 licensed child care facilities in Chatham County; 28 are child care centers and 13 are Family Child Care Homes (FCCH). As you can see by the chart and map below, child care availability is strikingly lower in the more rural areas of the county than in Pittsboro, Siler City and the growing northern areas of the county identified by zip code as Chapel Hill. This again shows some of the disparities indicated in the demographics section of this report. While the higher numbers of young children in the growing northeastern area of the county and in Siler City reflect higher child care availability in these areas; the child care deserts in the rural areas of the county create additional hardships for families in the rural areas of the county who also experience higher rates of poverty. There are no child care facilities identified in the Moncure area where elementary schools show the lowest scores in school readiness and only three family child care homes (limited number of slots) available in the JS Waters elementary school district which also showed low readiness scores.

child care deserts in the rural areas of the county create additional hardships for families in the rural areas of the county who also experience higher rates of poverty.



Graphic 7. Chatham County Map of Child Care Facilities

¹⁰Under the child care law, religious sponsored centers have the option to operate under the provisions of North Carolina General Statute 110-106. This means that they are allowed to be exempt from meeting some of the child care requirements, but they do have to meet basic health and safety requirements. https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/Portals/0/documents/pdf/C/center_chp15.pdf

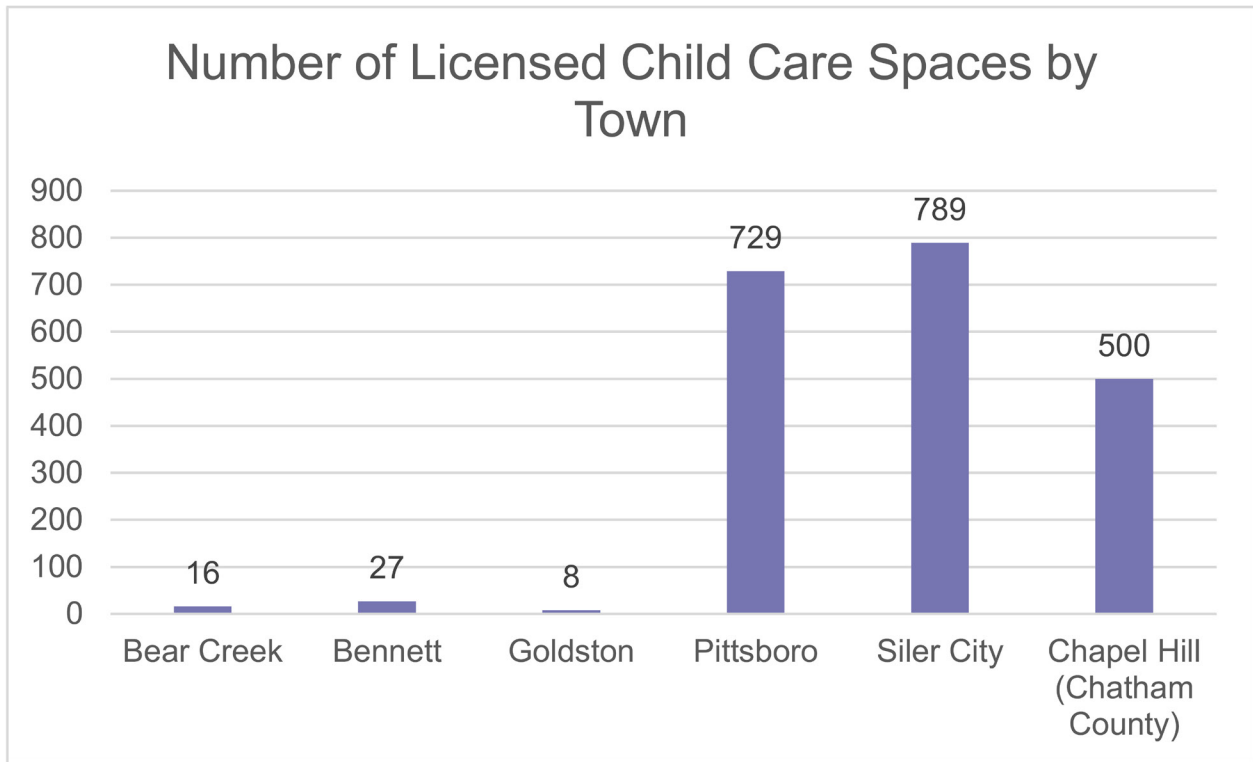


Chart 9. Chatham County Child Care Licensed Slots by Town

The North Carolina Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) issues star rating licenses (from one to five) to centers and FCCHs based on quality standards.¹¹ Higher star ratings indicate higher standards are being met in the areas of staff education and program standards. Chatham County has 17 centers and four FCCHs with four or five star ratings. Religious organizations operating child care are not required to participate in the star rating system and may be licensed as a “GS110-106” facility with no quality rating assigned.

Total # of facilities	Facility License	Type of Program: Centers	Type of Program: FCCH	Licensed Capacity
7	1 star	4	3	361
7	3 star	2	5	265
7	4 star	4	3	239
15	5 star	14	1	943
5	GS110-106; Temporary	4	1	261
41		27	13	2069

Table 11. Chatham County Number of Child Care Facilities by Licensure and Capacity

¹¹Star Rated License - Star Rated License (ncdhhs.gov)

Child care schedule options for families

Thirty-six (88%) of the 41 total child care facilities in Chatham County offer full-time care, 21 (51%) offer part-time care and 20 (49%) offer after school care. After school care typically refers to care for school-aged children, not necessarily for preschool-aged children following the NC Pre-K school day schedule. Thirty (73%) out of 41 providers are open all year while others close over the summer. The total licensed capacity is 2069, however, only 1821 of those slots are for full time care. Individual child care programs may offer multiple enrollment options to fit varying family needs.

Schedule Type	Number of Facilities Providing this Service	Licensed Capacity at Facilities Providing this service	Number of Facilities NOT Providing this Service
Full-time	36	1821	5
Part-time	21	1041	20
After School	20	761	21
Before School	14	377	27
Drop-in	12	329	29
Open during school breaks	10	299	31
Evening	8	99	31
Temporary/Emergency	5	99	36
24 Hours	4	32	37
Overnight	4	32	37
Rotating	4	67	37
Weekend	2	16	39
Open Holidays	1	8	40

Table 12. Types of Child Care Schedule Options in Chatham County by Number of Facilities and Licensed Capacity

Meals and food provisions

Most child care programs in Chatham County provide a standard breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack for children. A little over half are members of the USDA Food Program, which reimburses providers for nutritious meals and snacks. Only a few programs 8 (19%) are able to accommodate special diets.

Meal and Snack Options Provided	# of Facilities Providing Each	Type of Percent of Facilities
Lunch	34	83%
Breakfast	32	78%
Afternoon Snack	28	68%
USDA Food Program Member	26	63%
Morning Snack	11	27%
Special Diet	8	19.5%
Dinner	7	17%
Parent Brings Food	4	10%
Vegetarian Meals	2	5%

Table 13. Type of Child Care Meal Options in Chatham County by Number of Facilities
 Note: facilities may offer multiple options

Child Care Subsidy

Subsidized child care assistance is available to families in Chatham County and across North Carolina when they meet both income and situational guidelines. Income guidelines are based on 200% of the poverty level which is \$36,624 per year for a family of two. Situational guidelines are related to employment; education or job training; involvement in other Social Service benefits or programs; or having a child with developmental delays or experiencing homelessness.

In Chatham County, there was \$2,368,112 available for child care subsidies in Fiscal Year 2021-2022 from state allocated funds as well as Smart Start funding. Approximately 30.9% of all eligible children received subsidies that year. According to the Chatham County Department of Social Services (DSS) which has administered the Child Care Subsidy funds for the last ten years, as of March 2023, 184 children not yet in school were receiving subsidies with a spending coefficient of 81.33%. Then by June 30th they were serving 249 children who are not yet in school and an additional 40 school aged children. The spending coefficient at the end of the 2nd quarter was 113.41%. Also according to Chatham County DSS, there has not been a waiting list in several years although ten years ago the waiting list would have been between 300-400 children. They also reported that child care subsidy use declined during the COVID pandemic and has not fully rebounded.

The process for a family to access child care subsidy

Parents must visit DSS and provide the necessary documentation for eligibility. DSS staff reported that usually application denials are for failure to provide all of the necessary information. The family is then given a list of centers and FCCHs that take subsidy vouchers. The DSS team does not have information on openings, therefore, families are automatically referred to the Partnership for Children for assistance through Child Care Resource and Referral.

Once the family has identified child care, DSS will pay the subsidy directly to the center/FCCH according to the child's attendance. If a child misses 10 days in a month, the voucher will be discontinued. The subsidy rate is \$750 per month, for full time child care. Subsidy rates always lag behind current market rates and they are adjusted by county through a state formula. The most recent update to subsidy rates will begin in October 2023 and are based on a 2021 subsidy rate study.

Pre-K

The NC Pre-K program is designed to provide a high-quality, free, educational experience during the year prior to kindergarten entry, for at-risk 4-year-olds primarily from low-income families. Extensive research has confirmed that children who participate in the program experience significant positive outcomes that extend well into their elementary school years. Chatham County's NC Pre-K classrooms are located in public schools, at Head Start and in one private child care center.

NC Pre-K in Chatham County	2022-2023
Settings	Available Slots
Public Schools	187
Head Start	52
Private	42
Total	281

Table 14. NC Pre-K Spaces Available in Chatham County by Type of Provider

For the 2022-2023 school year, there were 283 children in Chatham County who were eligible for NC Pre-K according to DCDEE and 281 available slots. However, according to Chatham County Partnership for Children, the county administrator of NC Pre-K, only 212 children were enrolled in NC Pre-K.

Along with spaces, and at least one full classroom being unfilled all together, many spaces are also underutilized by the target eligible population. These children are not counted in the 212 NC Pre-K numbers which are reported according to the state funding source. The enrollment process is prioritized with income qualifying children having the highest priority if applications are received by the deadline. NC Pre-K is offered at no cost to these families. Then children with above eligible income may be accepted, still at no cost if there is another qualifying factor such as a child with special needs. No more than 20% of the enrollment may be above income guidelines, regardless of other qualifying factors. If all children who have applied have been accepted and there remains space in the classroom and there are less than 20% enrollment above income, then private paying parents may enroll their children at a flat rate. Private pay children are not counted in the NC Pre-K numbers and are not tracked across all classrooms. Admittance of private pay children is at the discretion of the provider.

The YMCA of Chatham, at the request of Chatham County Schools, has provided after school programming since 2021-22 that includes Pre-K children (including NC Pre-K and private pay Pre-K students) at four elementary schools: Chatham Grove, Northern Chatham, Perry Harrison and Pittsboro. These programs typically serve five Pre-K students at each school. According to YMCA staff, they could likely fill at least eight slots with Pre-K students if they had the capacity. Enrollment is based on a first come first served basis and returning students often get most of the slots. Pre-K students may not have been notified of acceptance in time to apply early. The cost is \$1,997 per school year (\$200/mo). The YMCA does not accept child care subsidy vouchers but does have scholarships available for up to 80% of the cost for qualifying families.

Child care enrollment

Chatham County has an overall licensed capacity to serve 2,069 children in existing early childhood facilities. However, provider surveys indicated that some providers would prefer to serve less than their licensed capacity or they are unable to serve their licensed capacity due to staff shortages or associated costs. Factoring in the preferred (actual capacity) over the licensed capacity, reduces overall supply by 27% (-568 slots). According to the NC Department of Child Development and Early Education's April 2023 statistical report, there were 517 children ages 4 and 5 in all licensed programs in Chatham County.

The Chatham County Partnership for Children recommended an assumption that 80% of children from birth to age five in Chatham County need child care. Controlling for the fact that many providers are not able to serve their total licensed capacity by approximately

27%, there is a gap of approximately 1,300 child care slots to serve the demand in the county.

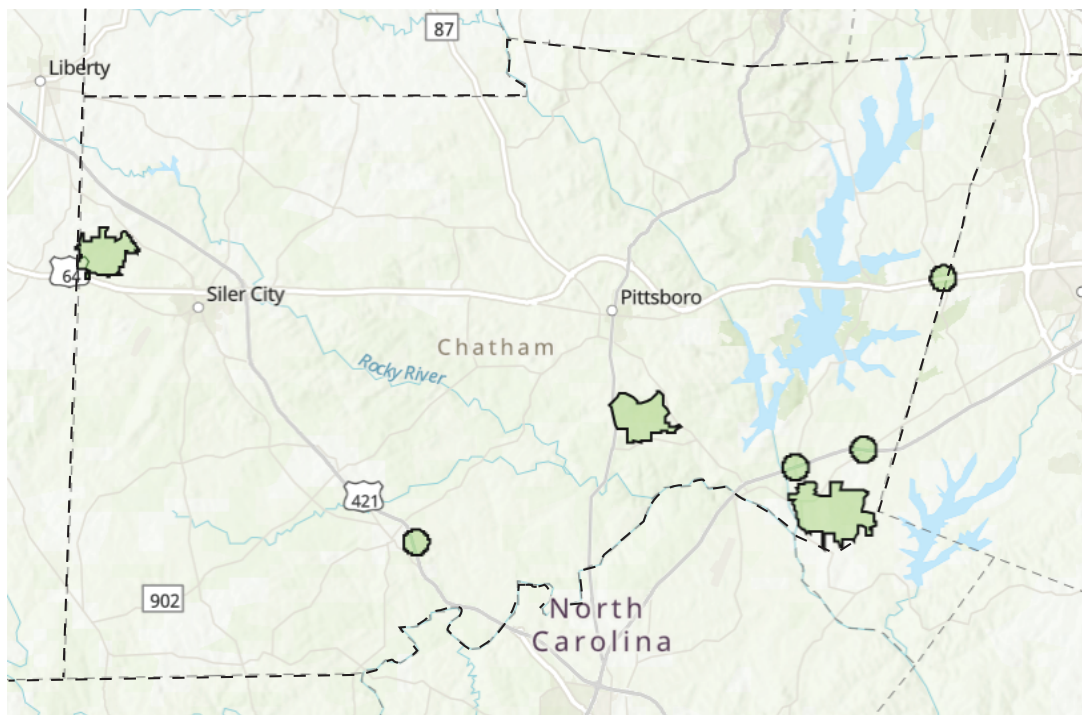
there is a gap of approximately 1,300 child care slots to serve the demand in the county.

From 2020 to the writing of this report, four child care centers and four Family Child Care Homes have closed, a loss of 296 slots. Also, two centers have opened giving a gain of 132 slots. This is overall, a net loss of 162 child care spaces over the last four years in the county.

a net loss of 162 child care spaces over the last four years in the county.

It is common for Chatham County parents to encounter long waiting lists and limited choices when they seek child care. This is especially true in more rural areas of the county. County-wide, infant and toddler care is the hardest to find. On the day of survey completion, there were 1,108 children enrolled in those 29 facilities and a waiting list of 401 children: 185 (46%) in the Pittsboro area, 139 (35%) in the Northeastern area where Chapel Hill spreads into Chatham County, and 73 (18%) from Siler City.

The map below shows positioning of child care facilities across the county as blue stars and the planned employment centers from Chatham County Comprehensive Plan. As new companies and other business growth continues at a rapid rate in Chatham County, residential neighborhoods will follow along with an increased demand for child care.



Graphic 8. Chatham County Map of Child Care Facilities and Employment Centers

FINDINGS

This section presents the views of Chatham County residents, as derived from surveys, focus groups, and interviews across a wide array of stakeholders and pulling from both Phase I and Phase II research. These findings were derived from ongoing dialogue among project consultants, advisors, partnership staff, and the many community members who contributed their insights.

Parents' perspectives

Living in Chatham County

Interviewed parents loved living in Chatham County, and they want to continue to raise their families in the county. In rank order, these are the best things about parenting in Chatham County, as mentioned by interviewed parents:

1. The feeling of community
2. Safety
3. The natural environment
4. Quality schools.

It's like everything just feels like the community is very safe, and everyone is so loving and willing to help you with whatever you need. I just love the community that we have here in Chatham County.

SYDNEY PAPAS.
INTERVIEW



However, there are some things that interviewed parents would like to see changed about raising children in the county (ranked below):

1. Lack of child care options
2. Lack of amenities (e.g. recreational facilities and activities for families and children)
3. The cost of child care
4. Challenges in balancing work and parenting (typically, this was closely tied to child care cost and availability)
5. High cost of living
6. (Lack of) safety
7. Lack of available/affordable housing.

Formal and informal child care

According to the Phase I survey of parents, 63.4% (180) of their children from birth to five are enrolled in formal care (Child Care Center, family child care home, part day preschool program, Head Start, or NC Pre-K). Fifty-six percent (160) of children from the survey are in formal care for more than 20 hours per week. Forty-four percent (70) of children who are enrolled for more than 20 hours per week in formal care are between ages four and five and 12% are from birth to 12 months old. We assume that those who responded “other” or “none” are caring for their own children or at least are not using formal care.

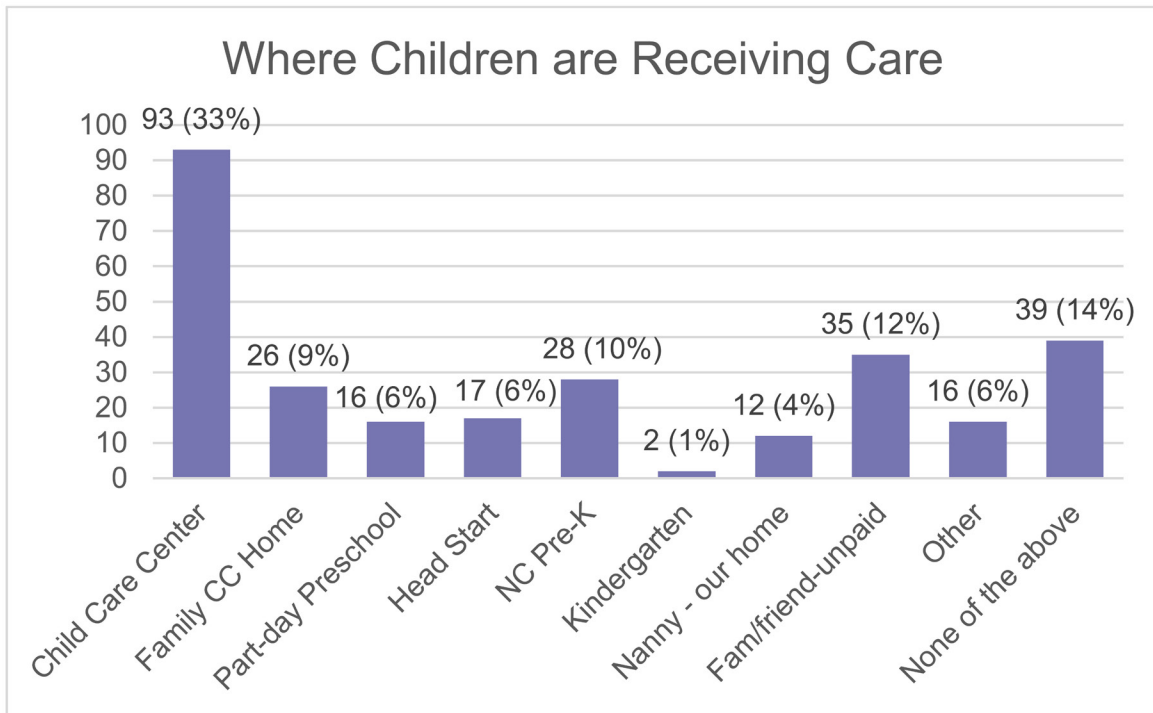


Chart 10. Parent Survey: Formal and Informal Breakdown of Where Children Receive Care

NC Child, a statewide child advocacy organization, recently wrapped up a 34-county listening tour of North Carolina, talking to hundreds of parents and child care providers about what they want and need from early childhood education. This study, Care and Learning Initiative, reported, “. . . they heard that quality child care comes down to three things: trust, affordability, and availability. Without all three, parents make sacrifices and hard choices, and providers are frustrated that they can’t offer what families need.” These same factors proved important to parents in this study, though other elements of educational quality were also valued.

The following table lists the reasons that surveyed parents and guardians selected their child care options in rank order. Both groups show high interest in who cares for their children and the cost of care. For those in formal care, location was also ranked high, while for those using informal care, availability of options needed was identified as a challenge.

Reasons for selecting <u>Formal</u> Child Care arrangements	Reasons for selecting <u>Informal</u> Child Care arrangements
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Caring teachers and other staff 2. Location 3. Activities to support social and emotional growth 4. Breakfast, lunch and snack provided 5. Reputation 6. Teacher-led structured activities 7. Small class size with a teacher and assistant in every room 8. High star rating (3, 4 or 5 star) 9. Cost 10. Recommendation from a friend 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Child care is too expensive 2. I prefer to stay home with my child 3. I prefer to have someone I know caring for my child 4. Concern about abuse or mistreatment 5. Concern about COVID or other illness 6. Child care options that I need are not available 7. Regular child care is not needed 8. Voucher for subsidy not available 9. Concern about religious preferences not being honored 10. Concern about teaching not being age appropriate 11. Need transportation

Table 15. Parent Survey: The Top Reasons Why Parents Selected the Formal/Informal Type of Care that They Chose for Their Child

Fourth on the list of reasons for choosing formal child care arrangements is the provision of breakfast, lunch and snacks. There are children in Chatham whose families have insufficient access to healthy food at home; for these children, child care represents an important source of nutrition. Parents from the focus group of those who do not utilize formal care, on the other hand, reported that they were able to provide better nutrition at home than their children would receive at child care. In the context section above, the data shows only eight child care programs in Chatham County allow parents to bring meals; four provide for special diets and two provide vegetarian meals.

Only 41% of children identified with Hispanic ethnicity were reported to be enrolled in formal care for 20 or more hours per week. In contrast, 62.6% of wWhite children were reported to be enrolled in formal care for 20 or more hours per week. Distrust and concerns about inadequate care as well as cost were strongly expressed by Hispanic/Latinx parents in a focus group and recorded interviews.





I think there should be cameras and there should be someone who really knows how to do their job and watch the cameras. Someone who is not even related to the people who are in the school, because if everyone is related, nobody is going to say anything. Quote from Hispanic Parents focus group participant.



. . . Almost the majority of the time, it is that you take them to someone you know or with someone who needs the money and you already know. You have to work. What I think this community needs is a daycare with a reasonable cost. Quote from Hispanic Parents focus group participant.



Pocos recursos financieros limitan la disponibilidad de servicios de cuidado y educación temprana de calidad. Sin el apoyo suficiente, no hay para proveeré para muchas familias y niños. (Few financial resources limit the availability of quality early care and education services. Without sufficient support, there is no way to provide for many families and children.) Quote from the parent survey.

Si no escucha uno comentarios de tus vecinos, de tus conocidos, de algún lugar para que sea seguro para tu hijo o que haya uno cerca, no tienes esa oportunidad de sentirte seguro, tanto como de llevarlo a algún lado con tantas cosas que pasan ahora en día. No. Yo tengo que llevarla a cuidar con mi suegra. Ahí la llevo todas las mañanas. Tengo que pararme a las 4 de la mañana, a llevar a mi hija. Porque yo con un familiar me siento más segura. (If you don't hear something from your neighbors or from your acquaintances about a safe place for your child, or that there is one nearby, you don't feel safe to take him to a place, with all the things that happen these days. No. I have to take her to my mother-in-law's for care. That's where I take her every morning. I have to get ready at 4 o'clock in the morning to take my daughter—because I feel safer with a family member.)



INTERVIEW: MARIBEL NOLASCO

Child care availability in Chatham County

The leading child care concern voiced by Chatham parents was simply finding care for their children at all.

Child care is probably the biggest concern for me and my friends and my neighbors. I had to choose a daycare in Alamance County, 10 minutes from where I work, because I couldn't find anything here... I think in terms of the county, thinking about the way things are changing, it just doesn't make sense to me that we have all this growth, we're building these beautiful houses, and every week on social media there's a new mom popping in "I'm moving in! Can you tell me about child care? I'm moving in! Like, what should I know?" And every time I'm like, "you should know that there is no child care here, unfortunately. Good luck!"



PARENT JESSICA MERRICKS,
PARENT INTERVIEW



There are just no options. Chatham isn't an incredibly populated county so if you are in the southern part of Chatham, you may not have any options that you are comfortable with. Quote from the parent survey.

Each family's needs are different, and many struggle with finding a program that accepts child care subsidies. Others need after school care, which is increasingly difficult to find, especially for preschool aged children who attend NC pre-K. High costs are a barrier.



Being a mostly rural county, there isn't the income for enough parents to pay for high quality child care so the options just aren't there. Having worked in child care in the past, I learned really fast that you get what you pay for in child care. Quote from a focus group parent.

Many families need care outside of regular child care availability hours (early mornings, late afternoons and evenings) and most programs do not offer extended hours. Families of children attending NC Pre-K must arrange for a 2:30 pick-up time. Transportation is challenging for many families, and this adds to the struggle.

Working parents described difficulties handling child care during the pandemic: one-third of working mothers and one-quarter of working fathers reported that they needed to reduce their work hours. Moreover, jobs that allow flexible hours and part-time options pay lower wages, so parents' earnings suffer both because they are working fewer hours and earning less for the hours they do work. The Economics of Child Care Supply in the United States, US Department of Treasury (September 2021)

Surveyed parents were asked to respond to the availability of child care by child age group. More parents reported concerns with the availability of child care than with the quality of care in Chatham County. Using the average response across all age groups, only 32% indicated plenty or a satisfactory number of child care options. Parents of infants reported plenty or a satisfactory number of options 26% of the time and parents of four-five year olds reported the same satisfaction 42% of the time. As the age of the child increased, so did the parents' satisfaction with the availability of child care.

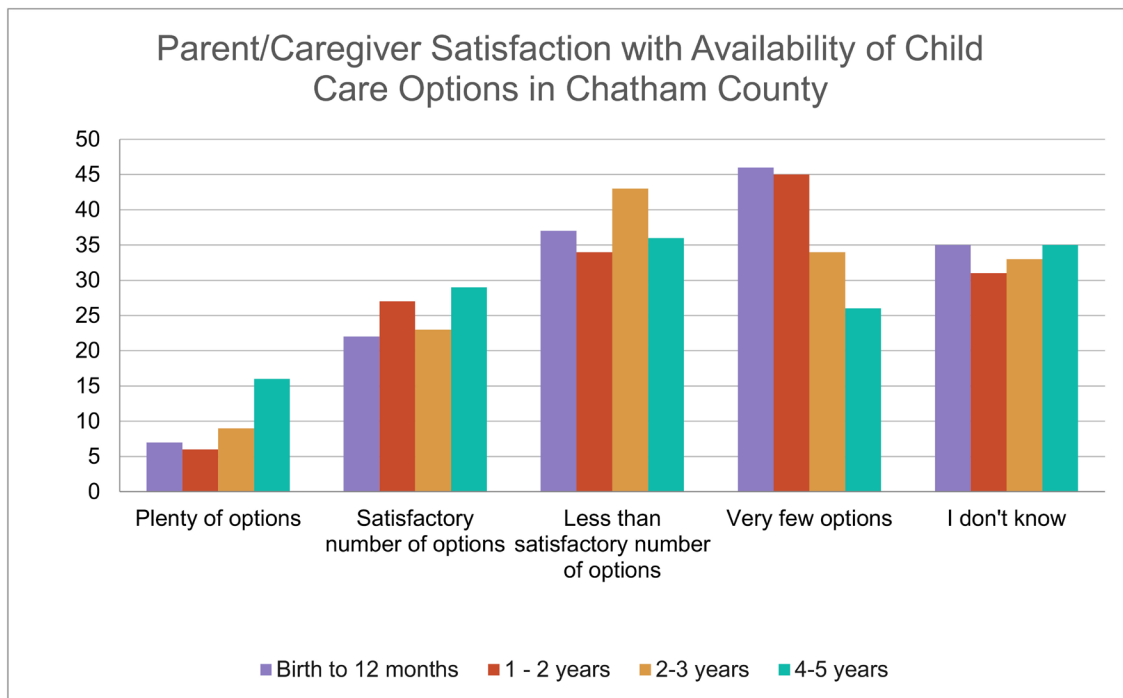


Chart 11. Parent Survey: Satisfaction with the Availability of Child Care Options in Chatham County

Access to high quality child care in Chatham County

Of the 180 parents responding to the survey with children attending formal child care, 89% (159) responded “yes” when asked if they had access to the quality child care option that they wanted for their child. Twenty-five (88%) of 28 families enrolled in NC Pre-K also reported that they had access to the quality care they were seeking. Ninety-six percent of parents whose children have special needs reported that they had access to quality care (25 out of 26). However, families who were using informal care (parent, nanny friend/neighbor or self) and those attending focus groups told a different story. Among survey respondents who are not using formal care for their children, only 61% reported having access to the quality care and education option that they wanted for their child. Parents from focus groups reported that their children had picked up bad behaviors at child care that later stopped when at home; their other complaints about formal care included poor practices in terms of safety, hygiene, food and mental health.



I've also struggled finding child care. My son, I have to get him tested for, like, ADHD and other things. So there's a lot more church orientated daycares, which I don't feel he would fit in there. Or like, they wouldn't be able to handle him appropriately. And all the really good daycares, you know, ones that I feel like he would be more suited for, are all in town and I can't take him there. Too far. He got kicked out of the one preschool in Pittsboro. And we came to CCDC in Siler City. And then when they didn't have a teacher and then closed down, Yeah, there's waiting lists, and we don't qualify for the NC Pre K, we didn't qualify for that.

Quote from a parent focus group

Parents completing the survey were asked to rate their satisfaction with the quality of child care options in Chatham County for different child age groups. The following chart shows these responses. The average response across all age groups (69%) indicated excellent or satisfactory quality. As children age, the likelihood of satisfaction with the quality of care increased; 73% of four to five year olds' parents selected excellent or satisfactory quality while 65% of infant parents said the same.

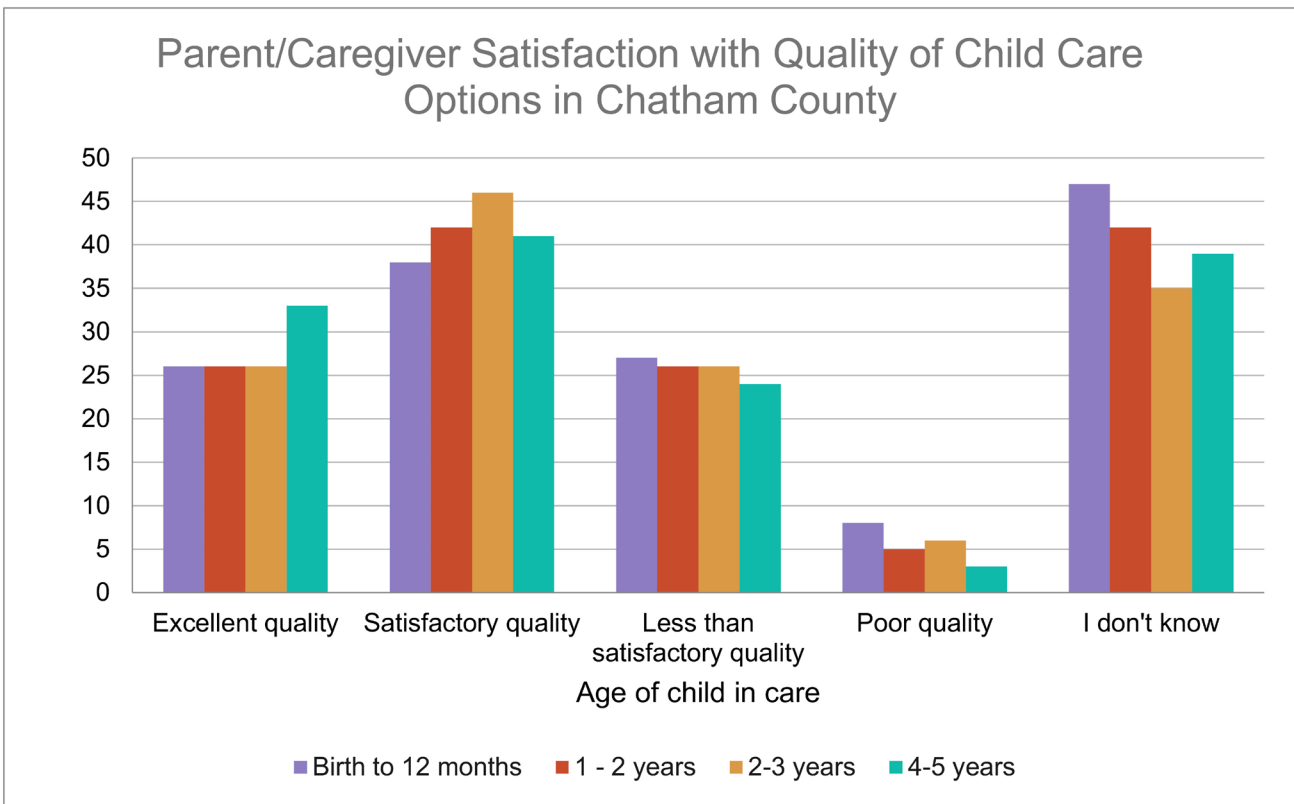


Chart 12. Parent Survey: Satisfaction with the Quality of Child Care Options in Chatham County

Parents’ definitions of quality care vary, however. Surveyed parents selected the following items, in rank order, as most important when looking for child care for their young children:

1. Caring teachers and other staff
2. Playground
3. Activities to support social and emotional growth
4. Location
5. Cost
6. Reputation
7. Educational activities
8. Building decor and cleanliness
9. Small class size with teacher and assistant in every room
10. High star rating (3, 4 or 5)
11. Breakfast, lunch and snack provided
12. Honors my culture, language and/or values
13. Developmental screening and referrals
14. Support for kindergarten transitions
15. Extended hours of operation

Interviewed parents mentioned the following attributes of child care as being valuable to them (items ranked by number of interviewees mentioning them; responses with same rank were mentioned by the same number of interviewees):

Top ranked items:

- Affordability
- Quality of education
- Quality of staff

Ranked 2nd:

- Convenient schedule

Ranked 3rd:

- Promotes social development
- Provider communicates well with parent

Ranked 4th:

- High quality care
- Child-centered approach
- Transportation options

Ranked 5th:

- Class size

Ranked 6th:

- Developmentally appropriate approach
- Fun environment for children
- Safety

Many of the same themes are evident across both lists. They reiterate the themes of trust, affordability, and availability cited earlier, while also identifying attributes of programming and staffing that parents consider important. Parents expressed a preference for intentional programming that promoted education and social development, rather than more passive caretaking. Competent, communicative child care personnel were also important to them.

A number of the same themes were evident when surveyed parents were prompted to identify barriers to high quality care in Chatham County. Barriers identified included:

- Cost
- Low capacity/high demand
- Staffing/wages
- Public policy and lack of support for child care
- Definitions of quality vary
- Inadequate outdoor learning spaces

Child care affordability in Chatham

The struggle to afford child care is a pressing concern for many parents. The challenge of paying for child care was not expressed only by low income parents, but by parents across the income spectrum. While low income parents' options were essentially confined to subsidized care, higher earners faced the challenge of paying out of pocket for care within the constraints of their household budgets. These budgets must accommodate not only child care but also other expenses like housing—which is also costly in the county, as interviewee Dakota Philbrick says:

You have an influx of folks who want to live in this area, and that's healthy. But what happens to the community members that have already been struggling in a sense to kind of maintain and to keep up? So there's already a lack of affordable housing in Chatham County.

DAKOTA PHILBRICK.
INTERVIEW



Delfino Benitez, a Siler City parent, described his family's predicament as follows:



DAKOTA PHILBRICK.
INTERVIEW

We're above low income, but right under middle income. So we're like in that little space and there's not a lot of help for us because we don't qualify for certain things because we make a little too much and then we can't afford certain things because we make too little. So it's just like we're caught in the middle and it's a limbo.... Working within the community, we hear similar stories about other families going through the same thing, and what they do is luckily most of them have families just like my wife does. We have families here who are able to take care of the child. But then again, when we have family members, usually we lose the aspect of that head start learning.

As Delfino explains, families that cannot afford the child care options available to them frequently fall back on unpaid care from family members, but this may come at cost to the child in terms of education and socialization.

Child Care Subsidy

The WorkLife Systems database shows 28 (62%) out of 41 child care providers are signed up to receive subsidies and an additional three are willing to take subsidies but have not yet signed up. Sixteen providers that completed our survey indicated that they currently receive subsidies for a total of 173 children. Twelve providers indicated that they offer multi-child discounts, four offer Military Subsidies, three provide scholarships, and two have a sliding scale fee structure.

Below is a list of the challenges identified by parents, providers, DSS and Partnership staff associated with the child care subsidy program and their ability to utilize all funds:

- Some families have different child care needs, inconsistent schedules, needing evening or part-time care and are unable to find programs that meet their needs, are within reasonable distance to where they live or work, and accept subsidies.
- Some families are approved and then never enroll their children. This could be because they were unable to find care that met their needs or their child care needs changed. Families may drop out without notification or feedback to DSS.
- There is often a parent fee above and beyond what is covered by the subsidy. These fees can be difficult for some families with low incomes.
- Subsidy is only available for children born in this country.
- It is difficult for families to find slots in facilities that accept subsidies, especially for infants and toddlers and in the western and southern regions of the county.
- Centers have to have, at minimum, 3 star license to be eligible to accept vouchers.
- Vouchers pay centers by the actual days a child is in attendance, rather than the weekly rates that are charged for private pay slots.
- Voucher rates typically run below the current market rates.

Raising healthy, happy kids

Child care may be the leading challenge for Chatham parents, but parents are concerned about the overall wellness and wellbeing of their children too. There are two categories of resources that they would like to see more of in Chatham: health care providers and recreational facilities.

Access to health, mental health and early intervention services

Through surveys and conversations with parents, child care providers, and other community members, the message became clear that child mental health, social emotional, and developmental support is limited and often requires use of out of county resources. In particular, families and providers are seeking more and better services for children with

disabilities and mental health challenges, including support for child care centers who work towards inclusion. While some parents reported being able to find the health and mental health care that they need, others are having to go out of county to get their needs met. Having to go out of the county for services, requires adequate transportation and time. Providers also reported having difficulty accessing therapists who could provide inclusion support for children in child care settings.

“

We have a fantastic dentist in Chatham County, but it takes us, you know, almost an hour to get there. Quote from a parent in a focus group.



I've had challenges finding therapists who will come out to this area to work with families and the schools. So a lot of the families that I'm referring to, they're either having to travel to Durham to get services or to Chapel Hill. So that has been a challenge as other service providers like speech therapists, occupational therapists coming and working in this area without asking the family to travel far.

TYKARA YOUNG, KIDSCOPE

It is also not just about the children. Parents need health and mental health support to be able to support their children. One parent from a focus group explained how caring for her children without being able to care for herself can be overwhelming:

“

And you're like I want to walk, the kids don't want to walk. They're not old enough. They won't stay in the stroller. I mean, you want to do things for your own mental health, but when they're so small, ... I mean, you have to put them first. But you do that so much that you kind of start feeling more like a ghost instead of a person. Quote from a parent in a focus group.

Resources for recreation and family activities are limited

In addition to challenges with housing and child care affordability, parents reported limited resources in Chatham County for recreational and family activities, especially in more rural areas of the county and especially indoor activity options. Recreational outings such as going to a bowling alley with the whole family, strengthen positive relationships and increase both physical and mental well-being. Low cost or free options across the county are important to provide equitable access for families at various income levels and for a healthy community.

The desire for more facilities for children and families was expressed most strongly by residents of Siler City and western Chatham, who perceive their options as more limited. This concern was also raised by Latinx interviewees, who overall described being less well connected to and served by county services than other interviewees.

Providers perspective on child care in Chatham

Chatham County's child care providers are deeply dedicated to their field, and especially to the children for whom they care. Some of interviewed providers' favorite things about their work include:

- Making a lasting impact on children's lives
- Creating a positive childhood experience
- Engaging with families
- Learning from children
- Love children, watching them learn and grow
- Performing the role of an additional "parent"
- Instilling social skills



They come to us, many have never been anywhere, and 10 months later, it is unbelievable how much information they have learned, how much they have physically grown, how much more they can do. - Provider from a focus group

At the same time, there are hard things about the job that they also described::

- Hiring and keeping qualified staff
- Insufficient compensation

- Challenges of providing child care during the pandemic
- Onerous rules and regulations
- Challenges of dealing with families
- Challenges related to work schedules and hours
- Effectively accommodating special needs students

Child care workforce

There is a workforce shortage causing a crisis in the child care industry across the country and data from this Early Childhood Needs Assessment is showing the same crisis here in Chatham County. Inadequate staffing affects the quality of care and has caused classrooms and whole centers to be closed.

Beginning with the pipeline of early childhood educators, fewer people are entering the profession. Providers and key informants reported the declining reputation for jobs in early childhood including low pay, limited or no benefits, irregular work hours, and extensive regulations and requirements to meet. Ginger Bartholomew, who directs the Early Childhood Education program and Central Carolina Community College, reported that the college has not held in-person early childhood education classes at the Chatham Campus in recent years due to lack of enrollment. Interviewee Heidi Lineberry, a child care center owner, says the impact of this lack of a workforce pipeline is evident:

There were a lot more early childhood teachers coming out of Chatham County, and now there's none. And it shows! You know, it's just basically people coming off the street... They like kids, but they have no idea what it takes to become a qualified early child care teacher.

It is difficult for providers to both hire and retain teachers and to afford the cost of living wages. Several providers reported that the best option they have is to hire someone young, out of high school, and work with them, train them, and help them complete classes so that they will continue in the position after graduation. This is not a foolproof plan because teachers are still leaving for other employment that offers more competitive salaries, insurance, and other benefits or choosing to further their education in fields that offer more. Providers reported losing staff to school system jobs as well as to new industry coming to the area. Interviewee Mona Scotton, a child care center owner, said, "we're losing teachers as far as everybody else is offering more money, bonuses, [including] the schools systems." FCCHs and smaller providers also reported losing staff to newer franchised or corporate child care facilities that have opened in more populated areas of the county.

These problems with the child care workforce are not new. For years Smart Start has led efforts to increase teacher education and training, salaries, and resources for providers to help recruit and retain their workforce. Yet the system has remained fragile. Then the COVID pandemic blew through like a hurricane. Providers closed classrooms and closed whole facilities. Child care facilities that remained open have been dependent on COVID relief funding to support pay increases and other incentives to help retain teachers and continue serving children.



The kids are what keeps us going. The staffing though has, it's been tough. Oh, it's for sure. Staffing is our biggest [challenge.] Yeah.

And it used to be where you could replace a teacher within a couple of months, like it wasn't a big deal. And now, I have some positions that don't require a license. And I still struggle with finding somebody that wants to be a lead teacher.

Quotes from a provider focus group.

Providers identified the following reasons for child care worker turnover before the COVID pandemic:

- Low pay
- Burnout
- Work ethics
- Moved to another job or became an at-home caregiver
- Teachers didn't want to further their education

Now, post-pandemic, provider survey respondents reported many of the same reasons for turnover and hiring challenges in addition to:

- A general lack of motivation around job expectations, work ethics and continuing education
- Staff moving to the school system or other opportunities
- Having no job applicants
- Health and mental health issues

It is important to note when looking at the child care workforce crisis, that caring, trusting staff was the highest ranked reason for selecting a particular child care option for parents

completing the Early Childhood Needs Assessment survey, and was also a top priority for parents who were interviewed.



Child Care Worker Salaries & Benefits

According to the provider survey results, teachers working in respondents' child care facilities are paid on average between \$12.94 and \$17.86 per hour, with the range accounting for lead, assistant and various education and training levels. The lowest pay reported was \$10 per hour and the highest, \$27.88.¹² A child care provider's salary in Chatham County is 37% lower than an elementary school teacher's salary.

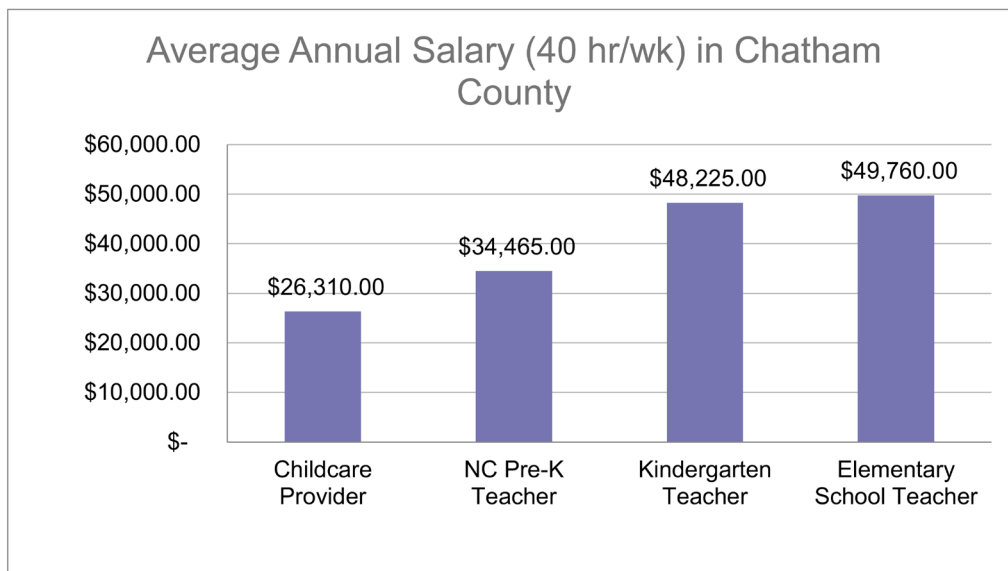


Chart 13. Average Teacher Salaries in Chatham County

¹²Only 17 (58.6%) out of the 29 respondents completed this survey question.)

After salaries are covered, there are rarely funds available for benefits for child care workers. Only five providers reported being able to fully pay for health insurance benefits and only six provide insurance at all. See other benefits below.

Benefits	# of Providers Offering This Benefit	% of Providers Offering this Benefit
paid holidays	17	41%
dependable and consistent weekly hours (ie. not based on child attendance)	16	39%
teacher evaluation and feedback	14	34%
paid time off	13	32%
cover the cost of professional development	13	32%
education or training	13	32%
paid time off to attend professional development	9	22%
health insurance	6	15%
dental insurance	6	15%
vision insurance	3	7%

Table 16. Provider Survey: Types of Benefits offered by Child Care Providers in Chatham County
 Note: Some provider may offer multiple benefits

Work Schedules and Hours

Aside from compensation, the schedule and hours of child care jobs can prove challenging. In order for child care providers to succeed, their work days must align with those of parents. It can be difficult for a provider to take time off, because so many other families are affected. Work schedules are also constrained by ratios: since a certain number of providers must be with children at any given time, it can be difficult for a provider to leave the classroom (e.g. for lunch break). These challenges create irregular and unpredictable schedules that induce added stress.

Locally owned child care businesses are struggling to remain viable

A lot of people see, oh, they're daycare centers, they got all these kids, you making this money, but they don't look at what's going out.... We're losing all the way around.

—Mona Scotton, child care center director

MONA SCOTTON, CHILD CARE CENTER DIRECTOR

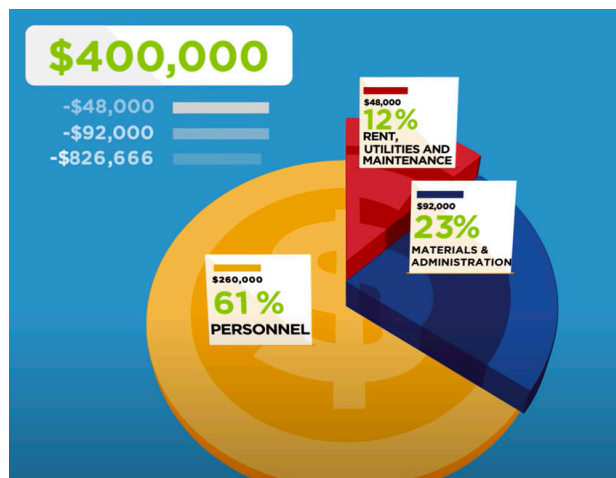


From 2020 to today, four child care centers have closed and four Family Child Care Homes have closed. These closures represented 296 child care slots (net loss of 162). Providers, through focus groups, surveys and interviews, reported about the challenge of making the numbers work. Parents also reported challenges with the cost of care, however, parent fees are inadequate to cover the expenses of high quality licensed child care.

Child Care Aware of America has created a video to explain “Why do parents spend so much on child care, yet early childhood educators earn so little?”¹³

The video describes a typical child care scenario where parents pay the national average rate of \$10,000 per year for care at a center with 40 children in full time care. The total revenue from parent fees would be \$400,000 annually. Typical costs associated with running a child care center of this size would include:

\$48,000	Rent, utilities and maintenance
<u>\$92,000</u>	Classroom materials, food and administration
\$260,000	Remaining for personnel



The remaining left for personnel is not enough to cover adequate wages for one director, three lead teachers and six assistant teachers that would be needed to manage appropriate ratios for three classrooms that are open for 10 hours per day.

Nationally, most private for-profit child care facilities operate on a margin of 1% or less, meaning that two months of less than full enrollment could wipe out their total profit.

¹³<https://info.child-careaware.org/blog/2018/07/parents-spend-much-child-care-yet-early-childhood-educators-earn-little>

This tight profit margin has a ripple effect with limited ways to cover the costs. Responses from surveys, interviews and focus groups highlighted the following cost-saving options, each of which may affect quality, equitable access to care, long-term viability, or economic stability for the facility:

- Increasing teacher/child ratios and other elements that impact star ratings
- Keeping cost of salaries low or not offering benefits
- Limiting or not accepting child care subsidies
- Delaying repairs or expansion efforts to facilities
- Utilizing grants and other funding that is not guaranteed income
- Increasing parent fees

There has been a 77% increase in the average number of days that providers reported it takes them to fill teacher positions from before the COVID pandemic to now, after the COVID pandemic. Pre-COVID: average length of time to replace a teacher position was 24 days; post-COVID: average time to replace a teacher position is 55 days.

COVID stabilization grants are ending

Exacerbating the workforce issue, the North Carolina Child Care Stabilization Grants funded through 2021 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) are quickly coming to an end. There are two components to this grant: 1) Fixed Costs and Family Grants that help to cover the true costs of child care and increase compensation for staff and 2) Compensation Support Grants which can either be used for bonuses for all staff or to increase base pay and/or benefits that can utilize a compensation scale according to experience, length of service and education levels.

Chatham County has received \$4,865,611 in NC Child Care Stabilization Grant funding, impacting 280 individual child care staff. NC DCDEE plans to utilize additional ARPA funds to expand funding, through June 2024, although it is unknown if this funding will be at 100% of current funding.

Child care providers interested in expanding

Twenty-nine of the 41 licensed child care providers responded to the survey during Phase I of this project. Eighteen (62%) out of the 29 provider respondents indicated a desire to expand their facility: 10 Child Care Centers and eight FCCs. Collectively, these facilities are caring for 715 children and have 279 on waiting lists.

Total # of Providers Interested in Expanding	Current Enrollment of These Facilities	Current # of Children on a Waiting List	# of These Programs that Accept Child Care Subsidy Vouchers	License Type
2	50	44	Ineligible to accept vouchers	1 Star
3	25	7	2 FCCHs accept vouchers; 1 FCCH does not	3 Star
4	110	8	2 FCCHs and 2 Center accept vouchers	4 Star
6	364	135	6 Centers accept vouchers	5 Star
3	166	85	1 Center accepts vouchers; 1 center and 1 FCCH do not	GS110; Temporary
18	715	279		

Table 17. Provider Survey: Enrollment, Waiting Lists, Subsidy, and License Type for Providers who are Interested In Expanding to Serve More Children

Ten of these providers who wish to expand said they have space for the expansion. Of those who wish to expand, one has already begun the expansion process and will be opening a new facility soon. Two others have begun to take steps to explore or plan for expansion. Others that want to expand, even if they have some space for expansion, reported funding, staffing and additional space needs as primary barriers to expansion. One home care provider would like to see the state allow up to six children in a FCCH (as opposed to 5.)

Child care providers interested in increasing quality

Thirty out of 41 child care programs utilize one or more of the following curriculums: Abeka, Creative Curriculum, Developmental/play-based, Language Immersion, Montessori, Reggio Emilia, Religious, Self-Designed, Other Curriculum. Eighteen (62%) providers that completed the survey indicated a desire to increase their quality: 11 Centers and 7 Family Child Care Homes were represented. They want to upgrade or expand their

space, strengthen teacher education and training, and obtain high quality toys and equipment. Yet, providers expressed the following obstacles to obtaining higher quality:

- Hiring qualified staff, including staff who want to increase their education
- Finances
- Unsure of steps needed to make changes
- Physical changes are needed to the facility
- Would like more parent concern and involvement

For facilities with these license types:	These are the ways they expressed wanting to improve their quality:
1 Star	Training Education for staff Higher quality toys and equipment
3 Star	Higher quality space/facility Training Training/education for staff
4 Star	Achieve 5-star rating Training/education for staff
5 Star	NAEYC Accreditation Training/education for staff Higher quality space/facility Higher quality toys and equipment
Temporary, GS110	Achieve 5-star rating Higher quality space/facility

Table 18. Provider Survey: Ways that Providers Would Like to Improve Their Quality by the Type of License for the Facility



Kindergarten Readiness

Through surveys, focus groups and interviews, respondents shared a wide range of thoughts and ideas on what “readiness for Kindergarten” means and what is expected or needed to help children get ready. Some believed that children need to learn academics like writing and recognizing numbers and letters. As interviewee Cindy Klaus said, these academic capabilities are now expected of entering kindergarteners in public schools:

Since I'm a reading intervention teacher, I work with a lot of our students who are not quite ready. The biggest thing is a lot of our parents don't don't realize that they're expected to know a lot of their letters and to write their name and things like that.

Others believed it is most important for children to be able to handle the structure of public schools: sitting at desks, walking in line, listening to a teacher, sharing and getting along well with others. Still others considered play and socialization as most important and that a child's development will naturally grow out of typical play. Klaus was among multiple interviews who favored a child-focused approach to kindergarten readiness.



CINDY KLAUS, INTERVIEWEE

Since I'm a reading intervention teacher, I work with a lot of our students who are not quite ready. The biggest thing is a lot of our parents don't don't realize that they're expected to know a lot of their letters and to write their name and things like that.

Interviewee Lori Lay, a child care center owner, described her goals for kindergarten readiness as follows:



LORI LAY, INTERVIEWEE

They need to be able to regulate their emotions to a degree that's age appropriate, of course. But there's a maturity—I think that that's important. More important than knowing how to read and write. What I try to instill the most here is self-help skills, being kind to each other, empathy. We have four rules at my school: take care of yourself, take care of each other, take care of our school, and take care of the world.

There were many other variations and ideas as well. The result is that parents are not sure whether they are preparing their children appropriately or not. One parent, Morgan Bare, described her experience as follows:

My daughter, she was not ready in all aspects when she started kindergarten. I feel like a lot of the child care facilities--well, the two that my children have gone to--they did focus on play a lot, and sometimes incorporating lessons or things that they need to prepare for school is not done all the time.



MORGAN BARE, INTERVIEWEE

Another parent explained that she and her fellow parents would benefit from more information about kindergarten readiness:

I remember talking to other moms and things and they're like, Well, we're just kind of playing and doing whatever at home, and we don't really know what we're supposed to be doing to get her ready for kindergarten. So it would be great if--I don't know if that needs to come from the schools--if your kid is three or four, mailing something to the parents and saying, Hey, your kid will be in kindergarten soon, here are some things you should know, or here are some things you should be working on, whether your kid's in daycare or not.... But I do think that child care providers, especially those that support a pre-K program, should be kind of maybe more proactive with communicating. All right, so in pre-K, we're going to learn these things and these are the things that need to happen in order for your kid to be ready for kindergarten. And here's some stuff you can do at home. I think that happens sometimes, but... there's no standard.

NC Pre-K Findings

Interviews with the Chatham County Public Schools and focus groups with NC Pre-K providers expressed challenges with the workforce as a primary reason that slots are not utilized by eligible children. Multiple providers talked about having to close a classroom as a result of not being able to hire teachers. However, it was also reported that there is an underutilized available classroom that could be operational if the demand was present, at Perry Harrison Elementary School, which pulls from the North Central area of the county.



We have had to close two [NC Pre-K] classrooms this year for under enrollment and we no longer get paid for empty vacant spots. So we don't have the students and so we did have to close two classrooms. Quote from a child care director interview.

The biggest challenges with NC Pre-K that parents expressed through focus groups, interviews and surveys is the schedule and lack of transportation. For working families, the schedule, which follows the public school schedule letting out at 2:30, is simply not feasible. Continued child care arrangements are necessary for the afternoon hours. With most NC Pre-K classrooms being embedded within public schools, there is no on-site extended child care programming. Interviewee Tasha Williams described the challenge that this presents for working parents:



Some days it's like who can we get to get him, you know, pick him up, because they get out at 2:30. So it's like trying to figure out, because your your work day don't end till five. So you got to make sure you got somebody that can pick them up. And then if something comes up, you're stuck. You know, do you send them to school or do you keep them? I mean, you keep them at home, because you don't have reliable transportation.

TASHA WILLIAMS, INTERVIEWEE

According to Chatham County Schools, only Bennett Elementary offers transportation for nine children. Public school transportation safety guidelines make transporting preschool aged students somewhat complicated: Space must be available on buses where the younger children can be separated from K-12 students and placed in reserved seating at the front. They also must have a parent waiting at the drop off site.

With these challenges, parents have to take off from work or arrange other transportation to have children picked up at 2:30 and taken to an afternoon child care provider that offers part time care. Private providers who once offered NC Pre-K indicated that the schedule also created difficulty for them in managing ratios and staffing. The NC Pre-K classroom(s) were difficult to incorporate into the flow of the organization and had to be managed completely separate from the rest of their program.



We do have to have them picked up by 2:30. So they don't have child care. We don't have a wraparound or anything like that.
Quote from a NC Pre-K provider focus group.

The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) conducted a study in 2018, *Barriers to Expansion of NC Pre-K: Problems and Potential Solutions*. The study concluded: “The overriding, fundamental barrier to expanding NC Pre-K is that revenues and other resources available to NC Pre-K providers are too often inadequate to cover the costs of expansion. Exacerbating that fundamental barrier are:

- Rising operating costs, including costs to recruit and retain qualified teachers, expand facilities and provide transportation.
- Stagnant state reimbursement rates since 2012 that fail to cover NC Pre-K costs.”

NC Pre-K pays private centers a rate of \$719 per child per month for the 2023-24 school year. Public schools get \$515 and Head Start gets \$420 per child per month. The Chatham County Partnership for Children adds an additional supplement with SmartStart dollars to increase public school funding to an average estimated rate of \$571.85 per student. Teachers are required to have a bachelor's degree and therefore higher salaries are needed to retain staff. Yet, this state rate for NC Pre-K is less than what most private child care centers are able to charge. Inadequate reimbursement to cover the expense of offering NC Pre-K was the primary reason that private providers discontinued offering the NC Pre-K classrooms, according to the focus group of providers who have closed these classes.

Interviewee Adriana Espinosa, a child care center owner, described her experience with NC Pre-K as follows:

Yo no seguí con el NC Pre-K porque el NC Pre-K le paga al local muy poco. ... Pero yo tenía que tener una maestra que tuviera un grado muy alto en NC Pre-K, la tuve que entrar a estudiar además y ayudarle con la matrícula de la universidad. Eso no me genera ingreso. Mientras que yo tengo los niños particulares y ellos me pagan 800, 900 dólares, y la maestra no tiene que tener nada de eso. Pero estamos enseñando lo mismo. (I did not continue with NC Pre-K because NC Pre-K pays very little to the center.... But I had to have a teacher earn a very high-level degree in C Pre-K. I had to enroll her to study and her with university registration. These things do not generate income for me. At the same time, I have private-pay children and they pay me \$800-900, and the teacher doesn't have to meet any of those requirements. And we are teaching the same thing.)



**ADRIANA ESPINOSA,
INTERVIEWEE**

NC Pre-K programs in Chatham County, through Chatham County Schools, Head Start and private providers, also reported experiencing the same staffing issues as other early childhood programs, combined with the additional educational requirements for teachers. For example, according to Chatham County School staff interviews, Teacher Assistants are required to have 120 hours of professional development, however the schools are unable to pay them more because of state mandated salary schedules. Some reported workforce challenges as the reason for having to close classrooms.



A UNIVERSAL PRE-K OPTION

The development of a Universal “Chatham Pre-K” has been identified as a possible solution to the fact that not all children entering Kindergarten in Chatham County are considered “ready.”¹⁴ Jamie Detzi, Executive Director of Chatham Education Foundation stated, “If we’re going to increase our 3rd grade proficiency, what do we need to do on the front end to help make that happen? . . . Quality, 4-year-old preschool (education) is just one aspect of that.”

In response to the growing interest in Universal Pre-K for Chatham County, Partners for Impact was asked to explore the general thoughts on expanded Pre-K for all children in Chatham County.

Parent and Provider Perspectives on Universal Pre-K

The provider focus groups discussed the universal pre-K idea, which would be for free or low cost access to high quality programs for every child in Chatham County in the year before they start Kindergarten. The opinions were mixed. From an economic viewpoint, the current pay for NC Pre-K is not adequately covering expenses for providers. The current regulations and requirements of NC Pre-K do not work for private providers, so if Chatham Pre-K institutes similar or more stringent requirements, it would likely limit private provider participation. Therefore, the assumption from private providers was that the Chatham County Schools would take a lead role in any new initiative for universal pre-K. There is a concern that in the midst of a critical early childhood workforce crisis, a new universal pre-K program would siphon the few existing staff who have higher education levels leaving private child care programs in an even more challenging state. Chatham Public Schools staff expressed through interviews a similar concern about loss of teaching staff if the private sector took a lead role in providing a universal pre-K. Across the board, in focus groups and interviews, it was expressed that the school year and school hours schedule do not work for private providers or parents.

¹⁴Readiness for Kindergarten - This information shows the percentage of kindergarten students entering this school who demonstrated skills at or beyond the expected level of kindergarten children within the first 60 days of school in five domains of learning development (Approaches to Learning, Cognitive Development, Emotional-Social Development, Physical Development, Language Development and Communication). This is the starting point from which educators at this school began their instructional support for kindergarten students.

While some private centers are interested in expanding, many of them do not currently meet the quality standards for NC Pre-K and would need to increase quality as well as expanding slot capacity.

Surveys of parents favor “free, high quality universal pre-K,” however the details for quality, scheduling, and regulatory expectations were not shared for survey respondents. Ninety-four percent of parents answering this question responded favorably. Parents interviewed for the documentary video were also supportive of this general idea too, across the board. Some of them elaborated that making it work would require public education to ensure wide accessibility.



STAKEHOLDER RECOMMENDATIONS

Process of compiling stakeholder recommendations

Participants in the Chatham Kids Matter project were given the opportunity to envision how Chatham County could be the best possible place for young children to grow up. In order to gain an accurate understanding of the community's priorities for early childhood, we solicited stakeholder input in multiple successive phases, as follows.

1. Video interviewees were invited to share their ideas for best nurturing Chatham's children and families. Their recommendations are summarized in **Appendix H**.
2. The video summarizing interviewee perspectives was screened along with a summary of the emerging themes from Phase I at five Community Conversations (including a meeting of the Chatham Kids Matter Community Collaborative, plus four public meetings). During subsequent small group discussions, Community Conversation participants were invited to respond to the interviewees' perspectives and articulate their own recommendations. Recommendations were then tallied across all five conversations.
3. The Chatham Kids Matter Advisory Committee identified their own priority issues to address after reviewing the input of interviewees and Community Conversation participants.

Top 10 recommendations from Community Conversation participants (all of which were also raised by interviewees; recommendations with the same rank were mentioned with the same frequency):

Ranked 1st:

- Increase public funding for child care programs

Ranked 2nd:

- Expand access to child care
- Improve transportation options for children and families
- Better educate and engage parents/community regarding child care programs, options, and best practices

Ranked 3rd:

- Improve countywide support systems/networks for early childhood education
- Grow early childhood education workforce pipeline

Ranked 4th:

- Increase the pay and quality of child care jobs
- Build political support for addressing early childhood education needs
- Increase health care service availability in the county

Ranked 5th:

- Increase the affordability of child care.

Top issues to address, as identified by the Chatham Kids Matter Advisory Committee:

- Building public trust in and support for child care; communicating the crisis and making the case for investment
- Inadequate funding for early childhood education; gap between what it costs to care for/educate child and the funding available to providers (either through public subsidy or private customer payments)
- Availability and affordability of child care
- Wraparound programs and transportation (making programs like NC Pre-K more accessible to working families)
- Child development and school readiness: help all parents understand the roles of parents and providers in child development and school readiness
- Childhood education workforce pipeline (problem: pay is not competitive)
- Health and wellness resources—especially regarding early intervention needs
- Lack of facilities for early childhood expansion, both in the public and private sectors
- Growing child care resources to match Chatham’s rapid growth

The recommendations of the Community Conversation participants and the issues identified by the Advisory Committee overlap considerably; however, both are included here because they are worth considering in their own right. The Conversation participants bring concerns rooted in their firsthand experiences of the issues at stake. The Advisory Committee brings a systemic perspective informed by professional expertise in early childhood education and county-level program management. Both perspectives were valuable in arriving at this report’s conclusions, below—and both should be considered when developing the county’s Early Childhood Action plan.



CONCLUSIONS

The child care needs of many Chatham families are not being met. Many Chatham County families struggle to find care for their young children. Whether they are able to meet their child care needs depends on multiple, interrelated factors, including:

- ***The availability of spaces in child care centers.*** The number of spaces in child care centers is not keeping pace with the county's growth, and recent center closures have exacerbated the shortage. Some parents have to seek care outside the county or rely on grandparents.
- ***Cost.*** Child care is a major expense for many Chatham families. Their child care options are limited by cost or income eligibility (see Household Economics section, below).
- ***Geographic proximity of child care to family's home or parent's workplace.*** Chatham County is geographically large. A given child care facility may be logistically out of reach for a family if it is not near their home or a parent's workplace. Child care options are growing for more affluent parents concentrated in the county's northeastern quadrant, and these parents also may choose child care near where they work in the urban Triangle. The rural western and southern portions of the county are less well served, however. Major economic development projects that are currently planned for these areas threaten to exacerbate this issue.
- ***A schedule that aligns with parents' work days.*** If a child's care schedule does not align with a parent's work schedule, the family may need wraparound care or transportation for the child—and neither option is consistently available in Chatham County. The most frequently cited example of this misalignment is the North Carolina Pre-K program, which ends at 2:30 PM. Most NC Pre-K sites in the county do not offer wraparound care or child transportation. Therefore, parents who do not have the flexibility—or vehicle—to pick up their children at that time are unable to participate. Parents who work service jobs or second shift manufacturing jobs experience even more difficulty finding care during non-traditional hours. Some children have to go from one provider to another as parents try to make the schedule work.
- ***Families' trust in providers and their educational approach.*** A significant proportion of parents—especially Latinx parents—do not trust child care providers with their children at all. Parents who may not agree with a particular provider's approach. For example, parents expressed concerns about providers that did not adequately prepare their children for grade school or whose values might not align with their own.

Barriers to access may mask latent demand for existing services, such as NC Pre-K.

Is there truly a lack of demand from qualifying families for NC Pre-K, or are the barriers listed above preventing qualifying children from accessing the NC Pre-K service that they need, and that their parents would like for them to have? This latent demand is hard to measure because it is demand not for the service as it exists today, but for the service that would be desirable if it was modified.

Child care does not fit into the budgets of many Chatham County households.

As noted above, cost is one of the main barriers to child care access that Chatham parents cited. To understand the financial squeeze that these households are facing, child care must be understood in the context of an overall rise in cost of living. In Chatham, for example, housing costs are also increasing; as noted in this report, a parent with one child who earns the Chatham County Living Income Standard spends, on average, half of her/his income on child care and housing combined.

Among the Chatham households facing budgetary challenges, two groups pertinent to young children are affected:

1. Households of parents who cannot afford either the cost of existing child care options or the time/sacrifice of leaving the workforce to care for children themselves
2. Households of child care workers who cannot afford to support their families on the salaries provided in their field

Sometimes these two categories are the same households! Unfortunately, child care workers themselves are sometimes among the parents who cannot afford care for their children. Interviewee Justine Hilbert described her experience with this predicament as follows:

I was working full time helping take care of, you know, 20 other kids because I wanted my daughter to be able to have socialization and experiences and play. But then that was also super challenging because I felt like I didn't get to see her as much. And then just the cost of daycare, even with the 50% discount to work there, was literally half my paycheck still. So I'm like, Why am I working 40 hours a week for a few hundred dollars a month?
Justine Hilbert interview

JUSTINE HILBERT, INTERVIEWEE



Child care subsidy and NC Pre-K do not adequately address the needs of low income families. These programs are designed to address the challenge of costs for families with lower incomes. However, both programs have barriers that prevent them from helping many children. As noted above in this report, the NC Pre-K schedule is not convenient for most working parents. The child care subsidy program requires at least a three-star license. Because the subsidy program does not reimburse at current market rates, providers often do not accept the voucher or they limit the number of vouchers they will accept. There are also families who have an income that is just above the qualifying limits; they make too much to be eligible for these programs, and yet too little to be able to afford market rate child care.

Chatham families are relying on a hidden workforce to meet their child care needs. Many interviewees described how they, or other people they know, rely on help from family members or others in order to solve the budgetary and logistical challenges of finding child care. Since this “hidden workforce” is not documented in any centralized way, its size and economic contribution are difficult to assess. In reality, however, these hidden workers are a significant part of Chatham’s child care landscape, and their prevalence is indicative of the gaps with the formal child care system as it exists. Multiple interviewees (e.g. Delfino Benitez, quoted above) expressed concern that while informal child care may frequently be an expression of love, it may not provide education and socialization in the same way as formal care. Children’s school readiness may be affected detrimentally as a result.

Access to health care is not equitably distributed. Parents’ views on health care in Chatham are mixed: some are happy with the care that they and their children receive locally; others have not found what they need and have to leave the county for care—sometimes driving more than an hour. Mental and specialized healthcare, in particular, were identified as lacking. The need was felt more acutely in western Chatham, which is further from the abundant medical offerings of the urban Triangle.

Parents want more family-friendly recreation opportunities. Though child care is parents’ top concern, parents would also like more fun and educational activities to do with their kids themselves. The lack of recreational amenities was more strongly felt in western Chatham, with a particular interest in indoor recreation facilities (for rainy day activities). Inclusiveness is important: parents want activities that are not financially prohibitive, making them accessible to all of Chatham’s families.

Latinx families are less well served by the county’s early childhood resources than other populations. Latinx parents consistently described feeling poorly served by existing

resources for children and families in Chatham. As noted above, Latinx parents are less likely than other populations to enroll their children in formal child care. Latinx interviewees and focus group participants indicated a number of barriers to child care participation, including a lack of trust/confidence in providers, lack of available spaces, lack of transportation, and affordability (by contrast, African American interviewees of comparable economic status expressed high satisfaction with available child care options). Latinx interviewees also repeatedly expressed a desire for more services for families of young children—including educational and recreational activities/facilities, as well as postpartum care for mothers, etc.

Independent child care providers also cannot make the budgetary math work. Like parents, child care providers are struggling to cover costs. Their revenue, whether from paying clients or public subsidies, barely covers their expenses. Tight budgets prevent providers from paying competitive wages or offering benefits for staff, enhancing the difficulty in filling positions with qualified applicants.

The child care workforce pipeline is broken. Low salaries make child care careers unattractive; for those interested in the early education field, public school jobs pay significantly better. Consequently, the early childhood education program at Central Carolina Community College has had difficulty filling Chatham classes, and child care centers are having difficulty filling vacancies. Those who enter and remain in the profession are doing so out of passion for working with children, but they are making a personal sacrifice to do so.

Developmentally-appropriate education and kindergarten readiness are sources of anxiety and confusion for parents and providers. Both parents and child care providers feel pressure to make sure young children are ready by the time they start kindergarten, but views on how to achieve this vary. Some emphasize academic performance, while others prioritize social development. Some providers expressed the view that parents do not understand what child care providers do and may have unrealistic expectations; they would like to see more public education about early childhood education.

Chatham County's economic growth and its child care shortage are on a collision course. In addition to being an issue of household and small business economics, early childhood care and education is important to the economic development of the county as a whole. Chatham county is experiencing unprecedented growth on multiple fronts: large-scale upmarket residential development in the northeastern portion of the county, along with major industrial development projects in the southern and western portions. While these are certainly indications of the Chatham's desirability to both families and

businesses, they threaten to worsen the existing child care crisis in the county. If child care availability does not expand in tandem with growth and proportionally across the county, then the families moving to Chatham for housing and jobs will have an even harder time finding child care than families do today.



NEXT DIRECTIONS

Below, the consultants have provided some steps that the county would be well served by taking and also some areas for further research.

- **Honoring this research in the next phases** - The research, findings, recommendations and conclusions from this community needs assessment (Phase I & II) are intended to be a guide for subsequent phases of work that will ultimately result in an Early Childhood Action Plan for Chatham County. The voices of the community, as reflected here, are presented to inform the County's decision-making process, resulting in a renewed commitment to improving the lives of Chatham's youngest residents.

- **Improving understanding of kindergarten readiness** -
 - a. Develop a shared definition of kindergarten readiness
 - b. Determine how readiness will be measured
 - c. Help the community understand the definition and get on the same page

A possible process could include developing a coalition of early childhood professionals, public and private school representatives, child development professionals, and parents to recommend a clear definition of kindergarten readiness and a developmentally appropriate measure to be used across pre-K and kindergarten programs (public and private when possible). Consider the advantages and disadvantages of working with the state's current definition and measurement tool as well as other successful strategies that have been implemented (e.g. in Mecklenburg County). Finally, it would be necessary for Chatham County to adopt and identify funding for a broad training program to include formal and informal child care providers, teachers, school administrators, and parents on what constitutes kindergarten readiness and how early educators and families can help their children prepare.

- **Latinx/Hispanic outreach** - Based on interviewee comments, Latinx parents may place more weight on recommendations from peers than other forms of endorsement, so a peer referral outreach strategy could prove fruitful in helping them better meet their child care needs, increasing awareness of and strengthening trust in existing services.

- **Child care as economic development** - Adequate child care should be considered as part of the county's economic development infrastructure. Workers with children will only be able to fill the new jobs that are being created if they are able to find child care that aligns with their work schedules. Meeting these workers' needs will in itself serve to further grow the county's economy. After all, child care centers themselves are businesses and employers; their economic contributions should be taken seriously and supported.
- **Opportunities for further research** - The research from this project raised additional questions that could be explored through further research, particularly to expand understanding around the early childhood education workforce. Some areas for further research raised by the Advisory Committee include:
 - a. the dynamics and movement of workers between public school early grades, NC Pre-K, Head Start and private care Lead and Assistant teachers
 - b. child care salaries before and during use of the NC Child Care Stabilization Grants as well as quantifying turnover rates, length of tenure, and the " number of open positions for child care teachers and Pre-K teachers.This local research, coupled with exploration of promising practices across the country that increase early childhood workforce recruitment and retention, will help determine local strategies.



ABOUT THE CONSULTANTS

Partners for Impact, LLC is a consulting firm that strengthens the effectiveness of nonprofit organizations, coalitions, and collaborative initiatives to solve community problems. The company partners with agencies and community leaders to gain maximum impact through system-level thinking, targeted planning, data utilization, innovative programming, intentional communications, and skilled facilitation.

Community Voice Consulting, is a team of PhD-level researchers who have developed and implemented the evidence-based methodology called the Community Voice Method. The Community Voice Method is a research-based approach to community engagement and visioning that utilizes interviews, documentary film, quantitative analysis and a structured public input process.

APPENDIX A: GLOSSARY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD TERMS

Parent/Caregiver - The adult with primary responsibility for raising this child.

Child Care Center - A licensed child care facility.

Family Child Care Home - Licensed child care in a person's home.

Part-day Preschool or Nursery School - A program operating less than 4 hours a day.

Head Start - Federally funded, high-quality early childhood program for children ages 3 through 5.

Early Head Start - Federally funded, high-quality early childhood program for children from birth through age two.

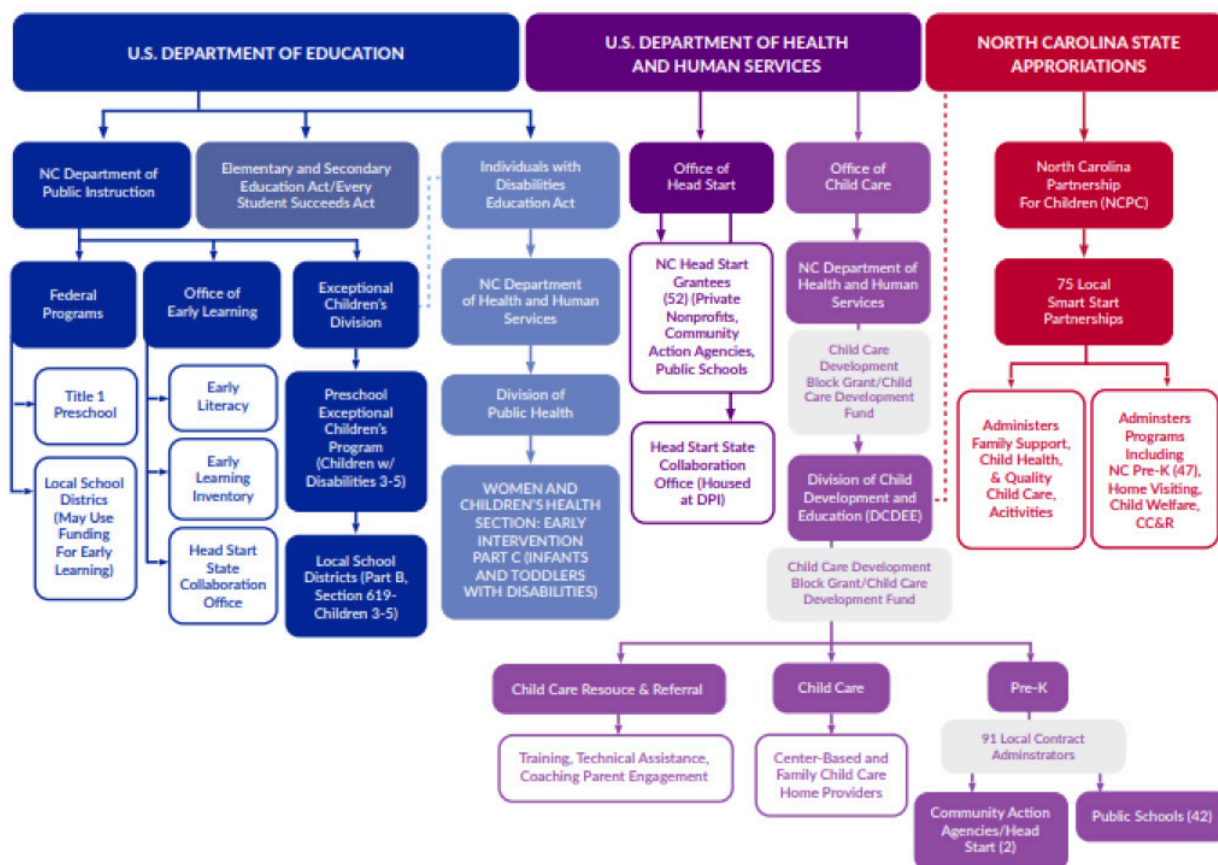
NC Pre-K - State funded, high-quality early childhood educational program.

Kindergarten - The public school classroom for children turning 5 before Aug 3.

GS110-106 - A religious sponsored child care facility.

Child Care Subsidy - Public assistance to pay for the cost of child care.

NORTH CAROLINA EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION NETWORK



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Definition of "Chatham Pre-K"

The following definition of Chatham Pre-K was developed by the Early Learning Planning Group, a subcommittee of Chatham Reads that was coordinated by the Chatham Education Foundation. Members included the following invitation list: Early learning center teachers and administrators; Chatham County Schools teachers, social workers, nurses and administrators; Early learning behavior specialists; Partnership for Children; ESL teachers; Special Education Teachers; and Spanish language preschool and child care staff.

The Chatham Pre-K Initiative has developed a definition of high quality pre-K for Chatham County which starts with the requirements for the NC Pre-K program and then builds on those requirements in a few important ways:

Supplemental requirements primarily at the facility level:

1. 5 star licensure by the NC Department of Child Development and Early Education. Currently NC Pre-K standards allow facilities to have a star rating of 4 or 5. Requiring a 5 star rating will create a stronger foundation for Chatham Pre-K sites. All of the current private NC Pre-K sites in Chatham County have a rating of 5 stars.
2. Compensation for teachers and classroom assistants which matches the compensation of comparable employees in the Chatham County Schools. Without comparable pay, it is difficult to maintain staff continuity and quality in pre-K classrooms. Supplemental funding will be required to support this objective.

Supplemental requirements facilitated through County-wide administration:

1. Supplement State approved curriculum with enhanced social and emotional components.
2. Complete an annual classroom assessment (such as CLASS) to create a corrective action plan. Enhance frequency and quality of coaching based on this assessment and plan.
3. Support State efforts to create an infrastructure that will link the assessment infrastructure between Pre-K and K-12. In the interim, support a manual transfer of information from Pre-K to K-12 teachers.
4. Every five years review the Chatham Pre-K program to verify it is meeting quality standards.
5. Advocate at the State level for NC Pre-K teachers and assistants to have more identical training opportunities.
6. Expand support for training to allow 15 hours per year for teachers and assistants.

7. Develop education support for a person with a two-year degree to pursue a bachelors degree while working in a Chatham Pre-K classroom.
8. Create an integrated learning community of public and private Chatham Pre-K teachers. Use this vehicle to share best practices and to vertically integrate with kindergarten teachers.
9. Define and implement enhanced bilingual and bicultural resources.
10. Create an infrastructure which handles program administration and funding coordination, as well as implementation of items 1-9 above.

APPENDIX B: BIBLIOGRAPHY OF RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

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[se/574,1729,37,871,870,573,869,36,868,867/6192,8162,6194/4766,12956](https://datacenter.aecf.org/data/tables/2281-uninsured-population-by-age-group?loc=35&loct=5#detailed/5/4928/false/574,1729,37,871,870,573,869,36,868,867/6192,8162,6194/4766,12956)

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[se/2048,574,1729,37,871,870,573,869,36,868/any/4676,14180](https://datacenter.aecf.org/data/tables/2236-children-birth-to-age-3-receiving-early-intervention-services?loc=35&loct=5#detailed/5/4910-5009/false/2048,574,1729,37,871,870,573,869,36,868/any/4676,14180)

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tion-Grants

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APPENDIX C: CONTRIBUTORS

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Interviewees for Phase II Film

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Special thanks to Chatham County Schools, Country Day Preschool, and parents whose children are pictured for allowing us to take photographs of children in early learning settings!

Photography by Gabriel Cumming

APPENDIX D: PARENT SURVEY



Chatham Kids Matter Parent/Caregiver Survey

Chatham Kids Matter
Chatham County Partnership for Children's
Early Childhood Community Needs Assessment

Chatham County Partnership for Children needs your input to identify the early childhood education and care needs in our community.

Thank you for your input!

You are the most important adults in your child's life, and that is why your voice and your input matters! His information will help us improve child care quality and availability. The survey will ask about your current childcare arrangements and your thoughts about what you want for your child during the year before they enter kindergarten, their Pre-K year.

Privacy:

Your voluntary responses will be separated from your contact information and kept anonymous. If you choose to be in the drawing and provide contact information, we will only use your email address for the purpose specified and all personal information will be kept completely confidential and will not be shared without your full consent. **The Chatham County Partnership for Children will not add you to a mailing list or solicit you in any way without your permission.**

You can follow the progress of this project at chathamkidsmatter.org.

First, we are going to ask a series of questions about your early care and education experience and your opinions about that experience for each of your children who are younger than age 6, starting with your youngest child.

1. How many children do you have **under the age of 6?**

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0 (I have no children under the age of 6) | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |



Survey created by Partners for Impact, LLC for Chatham County Partnership for Children

2. **How old is your youngest child** who lives with you or is in your care? (Check one)

- birth-12 months
- 13-24 months
- 2 years
- 3 years
- 4 years
- 5 years IN Kindergarten
- 5 years NOT in Kindergarten
- 6 years or older

3. Does your youngest **child attend any of the following** (Check all that currently apply. See definitions at the end of the survey.):

- Child Care Center
Name: _____
Number of hours per week- please circle or underline
Less than 5 hours 5 - 19 hours 20 - 29 hours 30 - 40 hours More than 40 hours
- Family Child Care Home
Name: _____
Number of hours per week- please circle or underline
Less than 5 hours 5 - 19 hours 20 - 29 hours 30 - 40 hours More than 40 hours
- Part-day Preschool or Nursery School
Name: _____
Number of hours per week- please circle or underline
Less than 5 hours 5 - 19 hours 20 - 29 hours 30 - 40 hours More than 40 hours
- Head Start Program
Number of hours per week- please circle or underline
Less than 5 hours 5 - 19 hours 20 - 29 hours 30 - 40 hours More than 40 hours
- NC Pre-K Program
Name: _____
Number of hours per week- please circle or underline
Less than 5 hours 5 - 19 hours 20 - 29 hours 30 - 40 hours More than 40 hours
- Kindergarten
- Nanny or other paid caregiver provides care in our home
- Childcare provided by unpaid family, friend, or neighbor
- Other: _____
- None of the above

4. Does this child have **identified special needs** for which you have or would want or need support in a childcare environment?

- Yes, and support is needed
- Yes, though support is not needed
- N

Types of needs/support (Check all that apply)

- Attention disorder or hyperactive (ADHD)
- Asthma
- Autism/Autism Spectrum Disorder

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Behavioral support needed | <input type="checkbox"/> Sensory processing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cerebral palsy | <input type="checkbox"/> Wheelchair or other mobility device |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Developmental delay | <input type="checkbox"/> Speech Therapy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Down's Syndrome | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Medical/Health Condition |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing impairment | <input type="checkbox"/> Other/Unspecified |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Therapy | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Occupational Therapy | |

5. If your child is enrolled in an early care and education program, what are the **reasons you selected your current option** for this child? (Check all that apply)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cost | <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher led structured activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accepts childcare subsidy voucher | <input type="checkbox"/> Activities to support social and emotional growth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Location | <input type="checkbox"/> Caring teachers and other staff |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers with college degrees |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Part day/full day options | <input type="checkbox"/> Small class size with a teacher and assistant in every room |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Part time options (2-3 days/week) | <input type="checkbox"/> High star rating (3, 4 or 5 stars) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Extended hours of operation | <input type="checkbox"/> Support for kindergarten transitions; kindergarten visits, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Options for my other child(ren) at the same site | <input type="checkbox"/> Honors my culture, language, and/or values |
| <input type="checkbox"/> After-school options | <input type="checkbox"/> Recommendation from a friend |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Building decor & cleanliness | <input type="checkbox"/> Reputation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Access to high quality playground equipment | <input type="checkbox"/> Provides religious teaching or honors my religious preferences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Breakfast, lunch and snack provided | <input type="checkbox"/> Bi-lingual staff |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Developmental screening and referrals | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Special services provided inside or outside the classroom (speech/physical/behavioral therapy, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

6. Did you have **access to the quality early care and education** option that you wanted?
Check one.

- Yes No

7. If your child is not enrolled in an early care and education program, **what are the reasons you decided not to enroll him/her?** (Check all that apply)

- Regular childcare is not needed
- I prefer to stay home with my child
- I prefer to have someone I know caring for my child
- Childcare options that I need are not available

- Childcare is too expensive
- Voucher for childcare subsidy not available
- Lack of transportation to available childcare
- Concern about covid/other illnesses
- Concern about abuse or mistreatment
- Concern about religious preferences being honored
- Concern that teaching is not age appropriate
- Other _____
- Other _____
- Other _____

8. **How old is your next child?** Check one.

- I do not have any more children under age 6
- birth-12 months
- 13-24 months
- 2 years
- 3 years
- 4 years
- 5 years IN Kindergarten
- 5 years NOT in Kindergarten
- 6 or older

*For **each additional child** under the age of 6, please fill out a copy of the **Additional Child Worksheet** and include it with this survey. One Additional Child Worksheet is included at the end of this survey.*

Thank you for telling us about your children. Now we have a few questions about what you think about early care and education in Chatham County.

8. How **satisfied** are you with the **number** of quality early care and education options that are **available** in Chatham County? Please check one in each category.

	Plenty of Options	Satisfactory # of Options	Less than Satisfactory # of Options	Very Few Options	I Don't Know
Infant care (Birth to One-year-olds)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toddler care (One- and Two-year-olds)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Two- and Three-year-olds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Four-year-olds/Pre-K	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please share what you believe is limiting the availability of quality early care and education in Chatham County. _____

9. How **satisfied** are you with the **quality** of early care and education in Chatham County? Please check one in each category.

	Excellent Quality	Satisfactory Quality	Less than Satisfactory Quality	Poor Quality	I Don't Know
Infant care (Birth to One-year-olds)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toddler care (One- and Two-year-olds)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Two- and Three-year-olds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Four-year-olds/Pre-K	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please share what you believe is limiting the quality of early care and education in Chatham County.

10. In general, what **features of quality early care and education are most important** to you? Please check one in each category.

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Neither Important nor Unimportant	Not Very Important	Not At All Important	I Don't Know
Cost	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accepts childcare subsidy voucher	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Location	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Part day/full day options	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Part time options (2-3 days/week)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Extended hours of operation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Options for my other child(ren) at the same site	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After-school options	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Building decor & cleanliness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Access to high quality playground equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Breakfast, lunch, and snack provided	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developmental screening and referrals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Special services provided inside or outside the classroom the classroom (speech/physical/behavioral therapy, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Educational activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Activities to support social and emotional growth	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Caring teachers and other staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teachers with college degrees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Small class size with a teacher and assistant in every room	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
High star rating (3, 4 or 5 stars)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support for kindergarten transitions (big school visits, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

14. What is your role in the household?

- Parent
- Grandparent
- Foster parent
- Other relative
- Other _____

15. What is the total number of people living in your household? _____

16. How many are children between 6-18? _____

17. How many are adults aged 18 and older in the household including you? _____

18. Are you of Hispanic or Latino or Spanish origin?

- Yes
- No

19. How do you describe yourself (race)? (Check all that apply)

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black/African American
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- White
- Other _____

20. Parent #2: Is this person of Hispanic or Latino or Spanish origin?

- Yes
- No

21. Parent #2: How does this person describe themselves (race)? (Check all that apply)

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black/African American
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- White
- Other _____

22. Is your youngest child of Hispanic or Latino or Spanish origin?

- Yes
- No

23. **How do you describe your youngest child (race)?** (Check all that apply)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian or Alaska Native | <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian | <input type="checkbox"/> White |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black/African American | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

24. **What is your employment status?** (Check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stay-at-home caretaker | <input type="checkbox"/> In training program |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employed full-time (30+ hours per week) | <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed/Looking for work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employed part-time (under 30 hours per week) | <input type="checkbox"/> Disabled |
| <input type="checkbox"/> In school (high school, GED, college, post-college) | <input type="checkbox"/> Retired |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

25. **What is your education level?**

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Some high school | <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High school diploma or GED | <input type="checkbox"/> Master's degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Paraprofessional or trade certification or license | <input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Associate degree | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

26. **If you share parenting/caregiver duties for this child with another adult, what is their employment status?** (Check all that apply.)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stay-at-home caretaker | <input type="checkbox"/> In training program |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employed full time (30+ hours per week) | <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed/Looking for work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employed part-time (under 30 hours per week) | <input type="checkbox"/> Disabled |
| <input type="checkbox"/> In school (high school, GED, college, post-college) | <input type="checkbox"/> Retired |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable |

27. **What is the education level of the other adult parent/caregiver in the home?**

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Some high school | <input type="checkbox"/> Associate degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High school diploma or GED | <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Paraprofessional or trade certification or license | <input type="checkbox"/> Master's degree |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral degree |

Other: _____

Not applicable

28. **Housing status** (Check one)

Rent

Live with friends or family

Own

Other

29. **Household income range**

Under 15,000

75,000 - 99,999

15,000 - 24,999

100,000 - 149,999

25,000 - 34,999

150,000 - 199,999

35,000 - 49,999

Over 200,000

50,000 - 74,999

Prefer not to answer

Thank you! Your input will help support child care options in Chatham County! Please visit www.chathamkidsmatter.org to follow the progress of this project.

May we contact you to get more of your thoughts about quality early care and education and Pre-K? Remember, if you give us your contact information, we will not solicit you for any reason other than participation in this Child Care Needs Assessment and we will not share your information with anyone without your permission.

There will be additional incentives for parents who agree to be interviewed, participate in a focus group and/or attend a listening session later this year.

May we contact you to get more of your thoughts about quality early care and education? If so, please provide your contact information below.

Yes

No

Would you like to receive a copy of the report that includes the results of this survey? If so, please provide your contact information below.

Yes

No

If you would like to participate in the **incentive drawing**, please provide your name and contact information. This information will not be connected with your answers to this survey and will not be shared or used for any purpose other than the incentive drawing for one of 25 \$25 gift cards to Food Lion. The gift card winners will be drawn within two weeks of the close of this survey, including any extensions. Winners will be notified within 24 hours of the drawing.

Other: _____

Not applicable

28. **Housing status** (Check one)

Rent

Live with friends or family

Own

Other

29. **Household income range**

Under 15,000

75,000 - 99,999

15,000 - 24,999

100,000 - 149,999

25,000 - 34,999

150,000 - 199,999

35,000 - 49,999

Over 200,000

50,000 - 74,999

Prefer not to answer

Thank you! Your input will help support child care options in Chatham County! Please visit www.chathamkidsmatter.org to follow the progress of this project.

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May we contact you to get more of your thoughts about quality early care and education? If so, please provide your contact information below.

Yes

No

Would you like to receive a copy of the report that includes the results of this survey? If so, please provide your contact information below.

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Are you interested in participating in the incentive drawing?

Yes

No

Name: _____

Phone number: _____

Email address: _____

Primary language: _____

Survey Definitions

Parent/Caregiver - The biological, adoptive, stepparent, foster parent, or guardian with primary responsibility for raising this child.

Child Care Center - A licensed childcare facility, not in someone's home; may be located at a church building or other type of business location or a residential type building that is only used for childcare and is not where someone also lives.

Family Child Care Home - Licensed childcare in a person's home/residence; limited to no more than 5 preschool children and up to 3 school age children.

Part-day Preschool or Nursery School - A program for young children that operates less than 4 hours a day. May be located in a residence, a church, or other community building.

Head Start - Chatham County Head Start is located on Martin Luther King Boulevard in Siler City; this program has certain financial eligibility requirements for enrollment.

NC Pre-K - The NC Pre-K Program is designed to provide high-quality educational experiences to enhance school readiness for eligible four-year-old children. This service is located in most of our elementary schools (except Bennett, Bonlee, and Moncure) and a few private childcare facilities (Children First, Pasitos, and CCDC).

Kindergarten - The formal classroom for children who are public school age (turn 5 years old on or before August 31st). Most children attend kindergarten before first grade although compulsory school attendance is not required until age 7.

Subsidy or Child Care Subsidy - Public assistance to pay for the cost of childcare, available through the Department of Social Services based on economic need. Eligible families are provided a voucher that they can use at qualifying childcare centers or family childcare homes; facilities must have at least a 3-star rated license to qualify and be under contract with DSS. Parents are also assigned a fee based on 10% of their family income.

Additional Child Worksheet

1. **How old is your child** who lives with you or is in your care? (Check one box)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Birth-12 months | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 13-24 months | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 years IN Kindergarten |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 years NOT in Kindergarten |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 years or older |

2. Does your **child attend any of the following** (check all that currently apply):

- Child Care Center
Name: _____
Number of hours per week- please circle or underline
Less than 5 hours 5 - 19 hours 20 - 29 hours 30 - 40 hours More than 40 hours
- Family Child Care Home
Name: _____
Number of hours per week- please circle or underline
Less than 5 hours 5 - 19 hours 20 - 29 hours 30 - 40 hours More than 40 hours
- Part-day Preschool or Nursery School
Name: _____
Number of hours per week- please circle or underline
Less than 5 hours 5 - 19 hours 20 - 29 hours 30 - 40 hours More than 40 hours
- Head Start Program
Number of hours per week- please circle or underline
Less than 5 hours 5 - 19 hours 20 - 29 hours 30 - 40 hours More than 40 hours
- NC Pre-K Program
Name: _____
Number of hours per week- please circle or underline
Less than 5 hours 5 - 19 hours 20 - 29 hours 30 - 40 hours More than 40 hours
- Kindergarten
- Nanny or other paid caregiver provides care in our home

Kindergarten - The formal classroom for children who are public school age (turn 5 years old on or before August 31st). Most children attend kindergarten before first grade although compulsory school attendance is not required until age 7.

Subsidy or Child Care Subsidy - Public assistance to pay for the cost of childcare, available through the Department of Social Services based on economic need. Eligible families are provided a voucher that they can use at qualifying childcare centers or family childcare homes; facilities must have at least a 3-star rated license to qualify and be under contract with DSS. Parents are also assigned a fee based on 10% of their family income.

Additional Child Worksheet

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- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Birth-12 months | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 13-24 months | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 years IN Kindergarten |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 years NOT in Kindergarten |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 years or older |

2. Does your **child attend any of the following** (check all that currently apply):

- Child Care Center
Name: _____
Number of hours per week- please circle or underline
Less than 5 hours 5 - 19 hours 20 - 29 hours 30 - 40 hours More than 40 hours
- Family Child Care Home
Name: _____
Number of hours per week- please circle or underline
Less than 5 hours 5 - 19 hours 20 - 29 hours 30 - 40 hours More than 40 hours
- Part-day Preschool or Nursery School
Name: _____
Number of hours per week- please circle or underline
Less than 5 hours 5 - 19 hours 20 - 29 hours 30 - 40 hours More than 40 hours
- Head Start Program
Number of hours per week- please circle or underline
Less than 5 hours 5 - 19 hours 20 - 29 hours 30 - 40 hours More than 40 hours
- NC Pre-K Program
Name: _____
Number of hours per week- please circle or underline
Less than 5 hours 5 - 19 hours 20 - 29 hours 30 - 40 hours More than 40 hours
- Kindergarten
- Nanny or other paid caregiver provides care in our home

- Childcare provided by unpaid family, friend, or neighbor
- Other: _____
- None of the above

3. Does this child have **identified special needs** for which you have or would want or need support in a childcare environment?

- Yes, and support is needed
- Yes, though support is not needed
- No

Types of needs/support (Check all that apply)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attention disorder or hyperactive (ADHD) | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Therapy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asthma | <input type="checkbox"/> Occupational Therapy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Autism/Autism Spectrum Disorder | <input type="checkbox"/> Sensory processing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Behavioral support needed | <input type="checkbox"/> Wheelchair or other mobility device |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cerebral palsy | <input type="checkbox"/> Speech Therapy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Developmental delay | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Medical/Health Condition |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Down's Syndrome | <input type="checkbox"/> Other/Unspecified |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing impairment | _____ |

4. If your child is enrolled in an early care and education program, what are the **reasons you selected your current option** for this child? (Check all that apply)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cost | <input type="checkbox"/> Special services provided inside and outside the classroom (speech/physical/behavioral therapy, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accepts childcare subsidy voucher | <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher led structured activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Location | <input type="checkbox"/> Activities to support social and emotional growth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | <input type="checkbox"/> Caring teachers and other staff |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Part day/full day options | <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers with college degrees |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Part time options (2-3 days/week) | <input type="checkbox"/> Small class size with a teacher and assistant in every room |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Extended hours of operation | <input type="checkbox"/> High star rating (3, 4 or 5 stars) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Options for my other child(ren) at the same site | <input type="checkbox"/> Support for kindergarten transitions; kindergarten visits, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> After-school options | <input type="checkbox"/> Honors my culture, language, and/or values |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Building decor & cleanliness | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Access to high quality playground equipment | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Breakfast, lunch and snack provided | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Developmental screening and referrals | |

- Recommendation from a friend
- Reputation
- Provides religious teaching or honors my religious preferences

- Bi-lingual staff
- Other _____
- Other _____
- Other _____

5. Did you have **access to the quality early care and education** option that you wanted? (Check one)

- Yes No

6. If your child is not enrolled in an early care and education program, **what are the reasons you decided not to enroll him/her?** (Check all that apply)

- Regular childcare is not needed
- I prefer to stay home with my child
- I prefer to have someone I know caring for my child
- Childcare options that I need are not available
- Childcare is too expensive
- Voucher for childcare subsidy not available
- Lack of transportation to available childcare
- Concern about covid/other illnesses
- Concern about abuse or mistreatment
- Concern about religious preferences being honored
- Concern that teaching is not age appropriate
- Other _____
- Other _____
- Other _____

7. **How old is your next child?** (Check one)

- I do not have any more children under age 6
- Birth-12 months
- 13-24 months
- 2 years
- 3 years
- 4 years
- 5 years IN Kindergarten
- 5 years NOT in Kindergarten
- 6 years or older

8. Is this child of Hispanic or Latino or Spanish origin?

Yes

No

9. How do you describe this child (race)? (Check all that apply)

American Indian or Alaska Native

Asian

Black/African American

Native Hawaiian or other Pacific
Islander

White

Other _____

For more children, ask for more “Additional Child Worksheets.”

Thank you again!

APPENDIX E: CHILD CARE PROVIDER SURVEY

PROVIDER DATA COLLECTION

Contact Information

WLS Questions

1. Director's name and contact email
2. Business Name (Facility Name); and DBA (Doing Business As) if appropriate
3. Facility Location Address
4. City, State, Zip County
5. Facility Mailing Address
6. City, State, County
7. Primary Telephone

Credentials

WLS Questions

8. License ID
9. License Established
10. Date Of Current License
11. Type Of Care (Check One Only)
 - Child Care Center
 - Family Child Care Home
 - Summer Day Camp
12. What is your license type? (Check only one option)

1 Star	5 Star	Provisional
2 Star	GS 110-106	Special Provisional
3 Star	Temporary	License Exempt
4 Star	Probationary	Summer Day Camp
13. What accreditation(s) does your facility have? (Check all that apply.)
 - Developmental Day
 - AMI (American Montessori International)
 - NFFC (National Association of Family Child Care Homes)
 - AMS (American Montessori Society)

- NAEYC (National Association for The Education of Young Children)
- ACA (American Camping Association)
- Other _____

Schedules

WLS Questions

14. What days of the week is the facility open? (Check all that apply)
- Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday
15. What type of schedules does your facility provide? (Check all that apply)
- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Full-Time | <input type="checkbox"/> 24 Hours |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Part-Time | <input type="checkbox"/> Weekend |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Before School | <input type="checkbox"/> Rotating |
| <input type="checkbox"/> After School | <input type="checkbox"/> Track Out - Year-Round |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Temporary and/or Emergency | <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher Workdays |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drop-In | <input type="checkbox"/> Open Holidays |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Evening | <input type="checkbox"/> Care for Sick Children |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Overnight | <input type="checkbox"/> Open During School Break |
16. What yearly schedule describes the facility? (Check only one)
- Full Year
 - School Year Only
 - Summer Only

Age, Rates, and Openings

WLS Questions

17. What is the total number of slots that your facility is licensed to fill?
(Use capacity as indicated on the license)
18. What is the preferred maximum number of children that your facility would like to care for? *At what number do you consider your program full?* (Must be less than or equal to licensed capacity).
19. What is the weekly amount that the facility charges families for full- time care (30 or more hours)? *What is your fee structure for children enrolled full time?*

If the facility has a fee range based on classrooms that combine ages, record the rate for the youngest child within each classroom's range.

If there is a discount for the second/third child in a family, only record the rate for the first child in the family.

If the facility charges by the month rather than by the week, multiply the monthly

amount by 12 and then divide by 52 to get the weekly rate.

Market rate can be the answers and then the interviewer will need to go back and get this information

Age Group	Rate Per Child Per Week
Birth To 12 Months	
1-Year-Olds	
2-Year-Olds	
3-Year-Olds	
4-Year-Olds	
5-Year-Olds	
School-Age (Summer)	
Before School (School-Age)	
After School (School-Age)	

20. What is the weekly amount that the facility charges families for part-time care (29 or less hours)?

Age Group	Rate Per Child Per Week
Birth To 12 Months	
1-Year-Olds	
2-Year-Olds	
3-Year-Olds	
4-Year-Olds	
5-Year-Olds	
School-Age (Summer)	
Before School (School-Age)	
After School (School-Age)	

21. What is the current capacity for the facility by each age group?

Moment in time, as of today

If the facility combines ages within a classroom, record responses based on the youngest child in the classroom. Example: A classroom of toddlers that could range from 10 months to 2 would be recorded in the birth to 12 month grouping.

A classroom like this may vary in age grouping as children move up and before

younger children move in. If this is the case, record based on the youngest child currently enrolled in the class. Example: with the same classroom above, if the youngest child is 13 months old, it would be recorded in the 1 year olds grouping.

	Staff/Child Ratio	Number Of Classrooms	Preferred Maximum Number of Children	Number Of Vacancies
Example: Birth To 12 Months	1:5	1	10	1
Birth To 12 Months				
1-Year-Olds				
2-Year-Olds				
3-Year-Olds				
4-Year-Olds				
5-Year-Olds				
School-Age (Summer)				
Before School (School-Age)				
After School (School-Age)				

Program Features

WLS Questions

22. What additional fees/policies/practices does the program currently have?

(Check all that apply)

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Registration Fee | <input type="checkbox"/> Parent Contract/ Handbook | <input type="checkbox"/> Parent Advisory Committee |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Activity Fee | <input type="checkbox"/> Pay Expected When Child Is Absent | <input type="checkbox"/> Waiting List Maintained |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Application Fee | <input type="checkbox"/> Pay Expected When Program Is Closed | <input type="checkbox"/> NC Child Care Subsidy Tuition Difference |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supply Fee | <input type="checkbox"/> Family Involvement Policy | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation Fee | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Late Payment Fee | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Late Pick-Up Fee | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other Fees | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No Fee Charged | | |

23. Does the program offer any financial assistance? (Check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sibling Discount | <input type="checkbox"/> Scholarships |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sliding Fee Scale | <input type="checkbox"/> Enrolled In NC Child Care Subsidy Program |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Smart Start Subsidy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Military Subsidy | |

24. What curriculum(s) is/are used by the facility? (Check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A Beka | <input type="checkbox"/> Opening the World of Learning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bright Beginnings | <input type="checkbox"/> Reggio Inspired |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creative Curriculum | <input type="checkbox"/> Self-Designed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High Reach | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Curriculum |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High Scope | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Montessori | |

25. What meals are served and what meal features are available in the facility?
(Check all that apply)

- | | | |
|--|---|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Breakfast | <input type="checkbox"/> Afternoon Snack | <input type="checkbox"/> Organic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lunch | <input type="checkbox"/> Parent Brings Food | <input type="checkbox"/> USDA Food |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dinner | <input type="checkbox"/> Special Diet | Program Member |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Morning Snack | | |

Additional Questions for Supply & Demand and Needs Assessment

Qualtrics Questions

26. How many children do you have enrolled today? (# field)

27. How many of the children currently enrolled are using subsidy vouchers? (# field)

28. Do you keep a waiting list? Y/N

29. If yes, how many children are currently on the waiting list?

30. Do you have interest in expanding to serve more children? Y/N,
short answer comments:

31. Does your current facility have space for serving additional children? Y/N,
short answer comments:

32. Would you like to achieve a higher level of quality for your facility? Y/N

If yes: What would you like to achieve?

i. quality level (checklist):

1-star

2-star

3-star

4-star

5-star
NAEYC
lower ratios
higher education/training for teachers
higher quality equipment/toys
higher quality facility/space)

- If yes or no to Q32: What is your biggest obstacle to increasing quality level?

33. How many full time and part time staff do you have?

- FT=consistently working 30+ hours per week: ____ (number)
- PT=consistently working less than 30 hours per week: ____ (number)

34. What is your salary range for teachers?

- Highest hourly rate currently being paid? ____
- Highest hourly rate currently being paid? ____

35. What employee benefits are offered?

Check all that apply.

(Checklist):

health insurance

dental insurance

vision insurance

paid time off

paid holidays

dependable and consistent weekly hours (ie. not based on child attendance)

paid time off to attend professional development

cover the cost of professional development

education or training

teacher evaluation and feedback

Other:

Other:

Other:

- If insurance is offered, do you pay for all or part of employee insurance benefits? pay in full, pay partial, n/a)

Considering your workforce prior to the pandemic and currently:

	Pre-pandemic (2018-19)	Currently
36. How long did (does) it take you on average to fill vacancies?		
37. How satisfied were (are) you with the level of training/education you are able to get in the staff that you hire	Not at all satisfied A little satisfied Somewhat satisfied Very satisfied	Not at all satisfied A little satisfied Somewhat satisfied Very satisfied
38. What are the top two reasons for the staff turnover experienced:	1. 2	1. 2

39. Is there anything else you would like to share with us about your program?
 [short answer]

That is ALL of our questions! Thank you!

APPENDIX F: FOCUS GROUP AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Child Care Provider Focus Group and Interview Questions

Introduction

- Please introduce yourself—your name, where you live
- Please tell me how you're involved in the care and education of young children—personally, through work, or both
 - If you're a parent, tell us how many children you have and their ages

Chatham County

1. How long have you lived in Chatham County? (Have you lived here your whole life, or did you move here from somewhere else?)
2. How has Chatham changed in that time?
3. In your view, what are the biggest challenges currently facing the county?

Provider questions

1. How long have you worked in Early Childhood Education?
2. What do you love about it?
3. What is hard about it?
4. What has changed in the last few years?
5. What barriers have you seen for parents in accessing child care for their children?
6. What specific barriers have you seen for Latino/Hispanic families?
 - a. What specific barriers have you seen for Latino/Hispanic families?

NC Pre-K Questions

1. Why did you choose to implement NC PreK in your center?
2. What are the barriers for parents to access NC Pre K in Chatham County?
 - a. Were you able to address those barriers?
 - b. What did you want to do better and what supports would you need to do it?
3. Can you tell me some of the positives and negatives about including NC Pre-K at your center?
 - a. Consider workforce
 - b. Consider regulations
 - c. Consider schedules/structure - example: NC Pre-K schedule that may not be like the rest of the child care center (more like school); also when it starts and stops - when new children enroll

- d. Consider costs - what did it cost you to implement? How did the cost impact your business? Did it impact younger age groups? Why did it cost this much?
 - e. Consider other quality factors
 - f. Demand - was the program full?
4. What combination of these issues led you to discontinue?
 5. For the challenges that you experienced with NC Pre-K, do you believe these are common challenges that others have faced as well?
 6. Do you believe there is a need or desire for a broader, more extensive pre-K programming for 4 year olds?
 - a. Does it need to be higher quality than NC PreK? In what ways?
 - b. What do you think the demand is for this?
 - Among lower income families?
 - Among other families?
 - Others?
 7. If so, what would you like that to look like?
 - a. Consider a vision that improves the challenges that you noted above.
 8. What factors do you see as a need in the Latino/Hispanic community when it comes to early childhood education and preparing children for kindergarten?
 - a. How does this address the quality needs for child care and quality of Pre-k?
 9. What are your recommendations for increasing the number of centers implementing NC PreK?
 10. Why are we not not putting more local money into NC PreK to get more lower income children enrolled to maximize those that qualify for NC PreK?
 11. What is the need for families that do not qualify (just barely above income guidelines)?
 - NOTE: experience shows that when NC PreK increases income limits, the slots fill up.
 - What does this mean for those with lower, qualifying incomes? Are they not able to access due to other barriers? Are their needs already met otherwise?
 - What is the number of families in Chatham that qualify for NC PreK but do not utilize the service?
 12. What information is needed to determine strategies to ensure that 4 year olds in Chatham County have equitable access to high quality child care?
 13. What are the greatest needs you are seeing around the following issues among the children attending your program?
 - Healthcare
 - Prenatal
 - Pediatric

- Social-emotional health
 - Healthy food
 - Safe and Affordable housing
 - For children with special needs
14. If Chatham County could be the best possible place for young children to grow up, receive care, and begin their educational journey, what would that look like?

Parent/Caregiver Focus Group Questions

1. Please share your name, where you live, and a little about your children.
2. What changes have you seen in Chatham County?
3. What are some of the best things about raising a child in Chatham County?
4. What are some of the difficult things about raising a child in Chatham County?
 - a. What barriers have you seen for yourselves and for other parents in accessing child care for their children?
 - b. What specific barriers have you seen for Latino/Hispanic families?
5. What is your opinion about the reasons, according to our survey, many parents do not choose to use child care?
6. What experiences are the most important for a young child's growth, development, and well-being?
7. How satisfied are you with the social and educational opportunities in Chatham County? How satisfied are you with other resources?
8. How would you describe high quality early childhood care and education?
9. What are your suggestions for recruiting more teachers of young children?
10. Why do you think $\frac{1}{3}$ of the children in Chatham County are not ready for Kindergarten?
11. If Chatham County could be the best possible place for young children to grow up, receive care, and begin their educational journey, what would that look like?

APPENDIX G: LIST OF EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS IN CHATHAM COUNTY

		Zip Code	Center or FCCH
1	Bennett PreSchool	27208	center
2	Casa Club Spanish Immersion Preschool	27517	center
3	Chatham County Head Start	27344	center
4	Chatham Grove Elementary School Pre-K	27312	center
5	Children First Learning Center, LLC	27344	center
6	Country Day Preschool and Nursery	27312	center
7	Creative Care Child Care	27207	home
8	Deborah's Day Care Home	27344	home
9	Holly House Preschool LLC	27312	not regulated
10	Kathy Cockman Day Care Home	27344	home
11	Kidz Korner In Home Day Care	27312	home
12	KinderCare Learning Center	27516	center
13	La La Kids Day Care	27344	home
14	Learning Lemon Drops	27312	center
15	Lil Tikes Learning Academy	27312	center
16	Lisa's Munchkinland	27207	home
17	Little Blessings Christian Child Care Center	27344	center
18	Little Lemon Drops	27312	center
19	Little Sprouts Child Development Center	27344	center
20	Little Sweet Potatoes	27312	home

21	Mason's Child Care Center	27344	center
22	Mason's Child care Center II	27344	center
23	Mona's Kiddie Care	27344	center
24	Nora Palmer's Child Care Home	27252	home
25	North Chatham Pre-Kindergarten	27517	center
26	Pasitos Felices (Happy Steps)	27312	center
27	Penny's Day Care	27344	home
28	Perry Harrison Pre-K Program	27312	center
29	Pittsboro Baptist Preschool	27312	not regulated
30	Pittsboro Elementary School PreK	27312	center
31	Primrose School of Chapel Hill at Briar Chapel	27517	center
32	Ready Set Grow Day Care	27312	home
33	Robyn's Nest Creative Learning Center	27312	center/closed
34	Siler City Elementary Pre-K	27344	center
35	Sonflower Seeds Preschool & LC LLC	27344	center
36	The Wright Place Daycare	27344	home
37	Virginia Cross Elementary Pre-K	27344	center
38	Watson's Day Care Home	27344	home
39	Wescare Child Care	27344	center
40	Willow Oak Montessori Children's House	27312	center
41	Write Beginnings Christian Preschool	27344	center

APPENDIX H: STAKEHOLDER RECOMMENDATIONS

Below are the recommendations made by interviewees:

Topic	Mentions *
Expand access to child care	8
Expand activities for kids and parents in Chatham	8
Increase public funding for child care programs	5
Improve countywide support systems/networks for early childhood education	4
Improve food access for Chatham children and their families	4
Ensure the our children's safety of Chatham children	4
Increase the affordability of child care	3
Increase the pay and quality of child care jobs	3
Increase cultural inclusiveness	3
Improve transportation options	3
Grow early childhood education workforce pipeline	3
Ensure high quality learning environments for young children	3
Improve child care facilities	3
Provide more support to Chatham families	3
Increase access to affordable housing	2
Create opportunities for community members to work together	2
Increase accessibility of county programs	1
Better educate and engage parents/community regarding child care programs, options, and best practices	1
Build political support for addressing early childhood education needs	1
Increase support for children with special needs	1
Expand wraparound/extended child care options (e.g. for NC Pre-K students)	1
Increase health care service availability in the county	1
Maintain an affordable cost of living	1
Protect the natural environment	1

*Mentions = the number of interviewees whose recommendations aligned with each theme. Total number of interviewees = 24.

Subsequently, participants in the Community Conversations (plus members of the Community Collaborative) were also invited to make recommendations for improving outcomes for Chatham County’s young children. Their recommendations are listed below.

Topic	Mentions *
Increase public funding for child care programs	9
Improve transportation options	7
Expand access to child care	7
Better educate and engage parents/community regarding child care programs, options, and best practices	7
Improve countywide support systems/networks for early childhood education	6
Grow early childhood education workforce pipeline	6
increase health care service availability in the county	5
Increase the pay and quality of child care jobs	5
Build political support for addressing early childhood education needs	5
Increase the affordability of child care	3
Expand Pre-K options	3
Build support for early childhood education in business community	3
Increase access to affordable housing	2
Expand wraparound/extended child care options (e.g. for NC Pre-K students)	2
Increase support for children with special needs	1
Increase cultural inclusiveness	1
increase accessibility of county programs	1
Improve countywide library access	1
Expand activities for kids and parents in Chatham	1
Improve countywide library access	1
Pursue innovative child care solutions	1

*Mentions = the number of small groups at Community Conversation meetings whose recommendations aligned with each theme.

The recommendations in red boldface reflect themes that were consistent across the interviews and the Community Conversations.