

THE STATE OF CHILD CARE IN BUNCOMBE COUNTY JUNE 2025

Buncombe Partnership for Children

a partner in the Smart Start network

OVERVIEW

- NC ECE Task Force
- Child Demographics
- Types of Care
- COVID Stabilization Grants
- Hurricane Helene Recovery
- Quality
- Availability
- Affordability
- Workforce
- Child Health

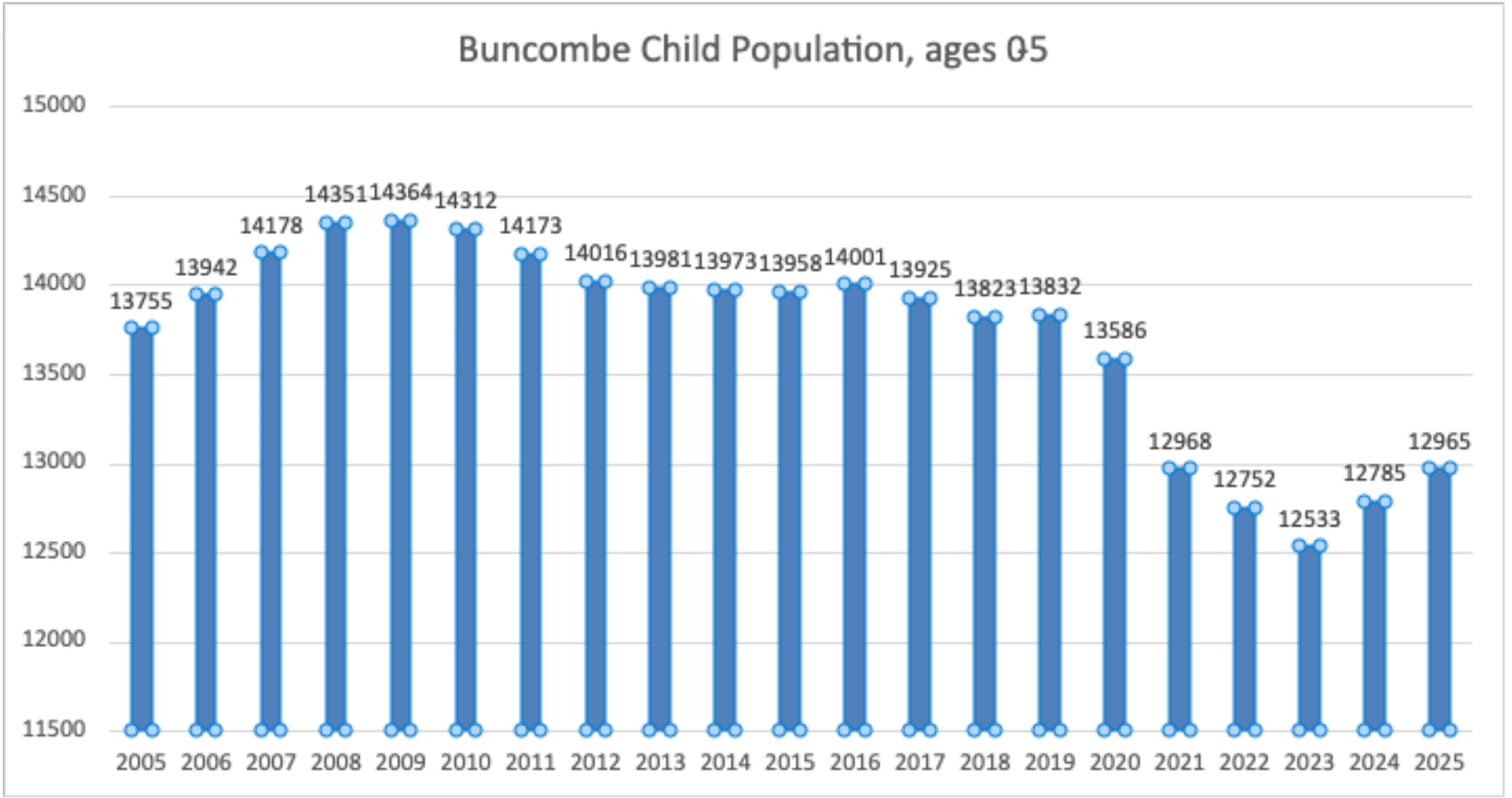




TASK FORCE RELEASES REPORT

On July 1, the North Carolina Task Force on Child Care and Early Education released its Interim Report outlining six recommendations to make high-quality child care more accessible, affordable, and sustainable in North Carolina.

1. Set a statewide child care subsidy reimbursement rate floor
2. Develop approaches to offer non-salary benefits for child care professionals
3. Explore partnerships with the UNC system, community colleges, and K-12 schools to increase access to child care for public employees and students at public institutions
4. Explore subsidized or free child care for child care teachers
5. Link existing workforce compensation and support programs for early childhood professionals
6. Explore the creation of a child care endowment



Current number of children birth through 5 years old (and not age eligible for kindergarten) = 12,965



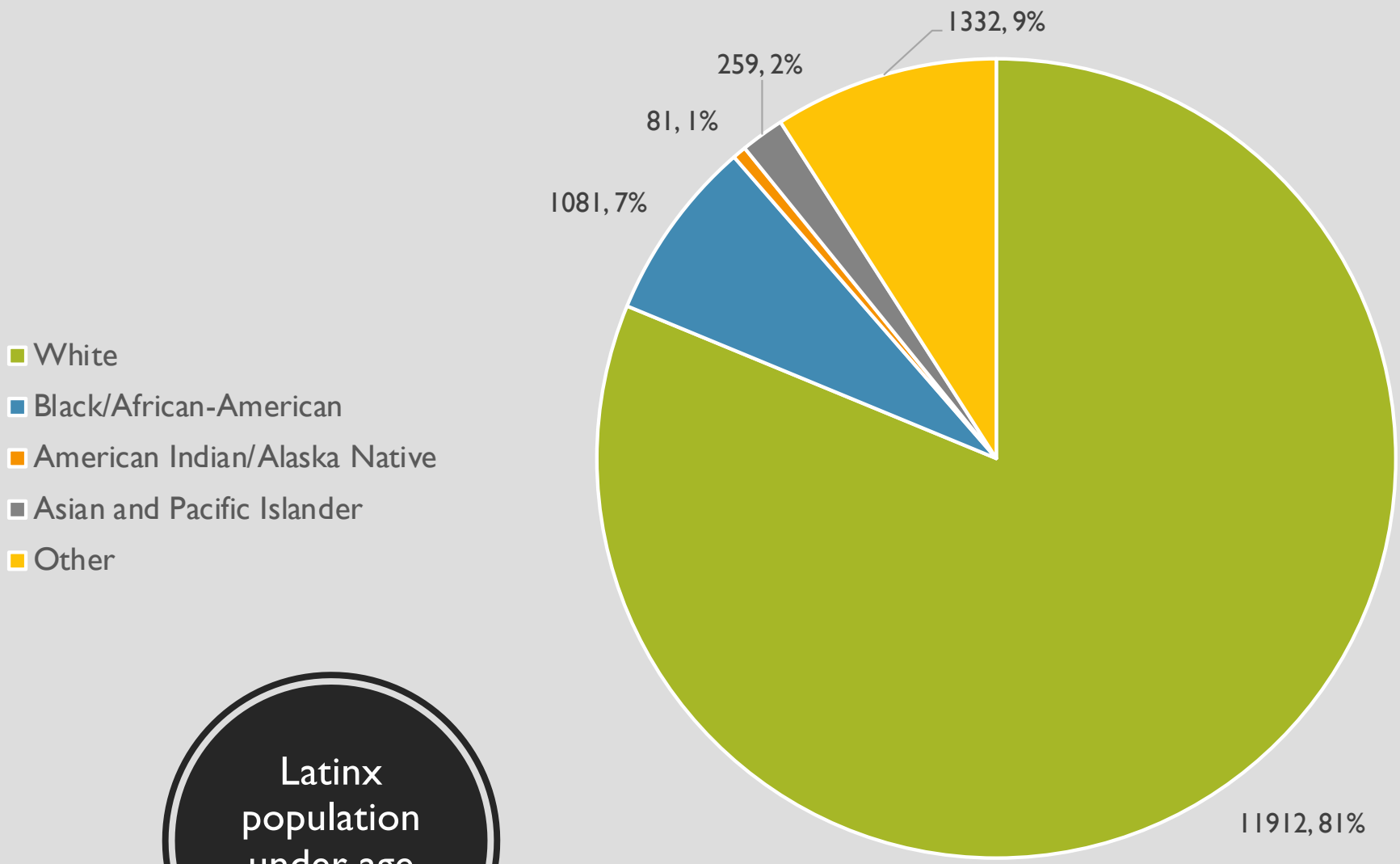
Buncombe child poverty = 16.4%

Buncombe County



Children in Care		Infants	1 yr olds	2 yr olds	3 yr olds	4 yr olds	5 yr old PS	Total
A	Children in licensed care	198	429	569	839	911	715	3,661
B	Total available child population	2439	2423	2415	2440	2411	837	12,965
C	**% of all children served (A/B)**	**8%**	**18%**	**24%**	**34%**	**38%**	**85%**	**28%**
D	# of children not being served (does not imply need) B-A	2,241	1,994	1,846	1,601	1,500	122	9,304

Buncombe children 0-5 by race, 2025



Latinx population under age 5 = 20%



TYPES OF EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

All care is regulated by NC Division of Child Development and Early Education (NC DCDEE):

- Licensed programs (more than 4 hours)
- Part-day, unlicensed regulated programs (4 hours or less)

Types of licensed programs:

- Child Care Centers – 89 (84 serving 0-5)
- Family Child Care Homes (FCCH) – 7
- Afterschool only licensed programs (ages 5-12) – 15
- Total licensed programs (0-12) - 104

Publicly-funded programs that make care more affordable for parents:

- Head Start (3- to 5-year-olds)
- Early Head Start (0- to 2-year-olds)
- NC Pre Kindergarten (4-year-olds)

DCDEE STABILIZATION GRANTS



- Total Buncombe jobs impacted = 1,144
- Total child care capacity impacted = 6,855

Buncombe dollars paid to date:

All payments = $24,964,343

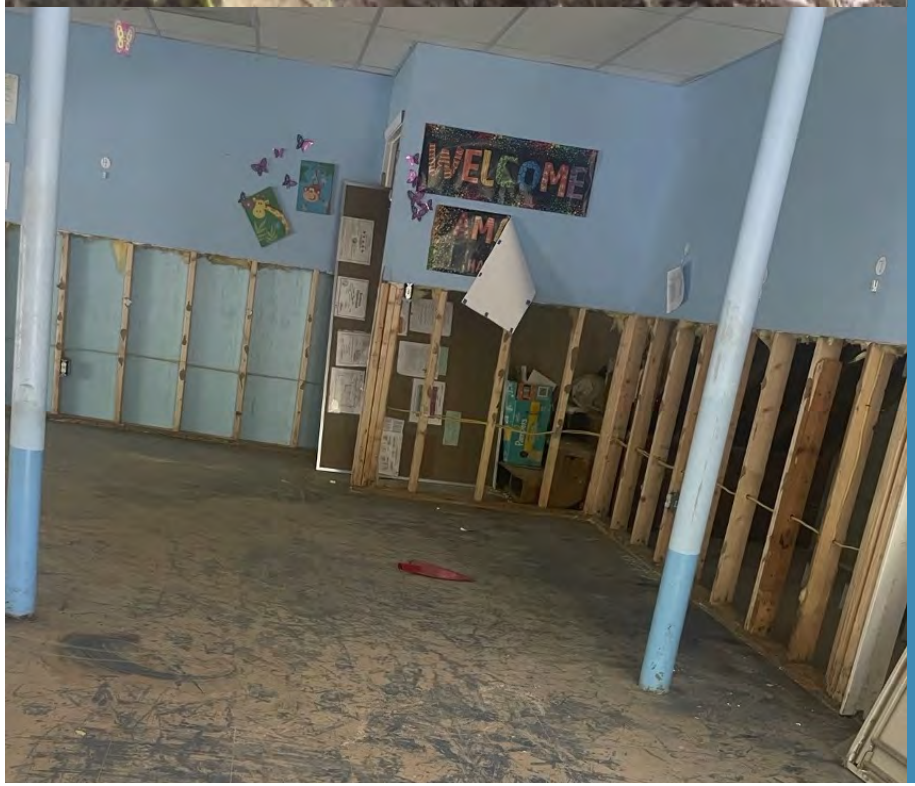
Fixed cost payments = $11,030,144

Compensation supports = $13,934,199

Center payments = $24,417,393

Home payments = $546,950





HELENE'S IMPACTS ON LOCAL ECE

Most programs closed for a month+

8 locations with significant physical damage. Of the 8, one program opened on June 15 and another remains closed.

These programs received significant financial support through Recovery Grants from the Community Foundation of WNC, Dogwood Health Trust, and an allocation from the NC General Assembly through the North Carolina Partnership for Children.

ECE ENROLLMENT IMPACTS

Sept 26, 2024	Jan 10, 2025
3710	3688

- **11 programs lost more than 10% enrollment:**
  - 6 home-based programs
  - Building Blocks (closed)
  - Christine Avery (Valley still closed)
  - Kathy's Kiddyland
  - All God's Children (closed)
  - East Avl Academy



QUALITY

How is quality defined in NC?

- North Carolina uses a Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS), which has a 1-5 star scale.
- 4- and 5-star-rated programs are considered high quality in NC.
- This scale is made up of two components:

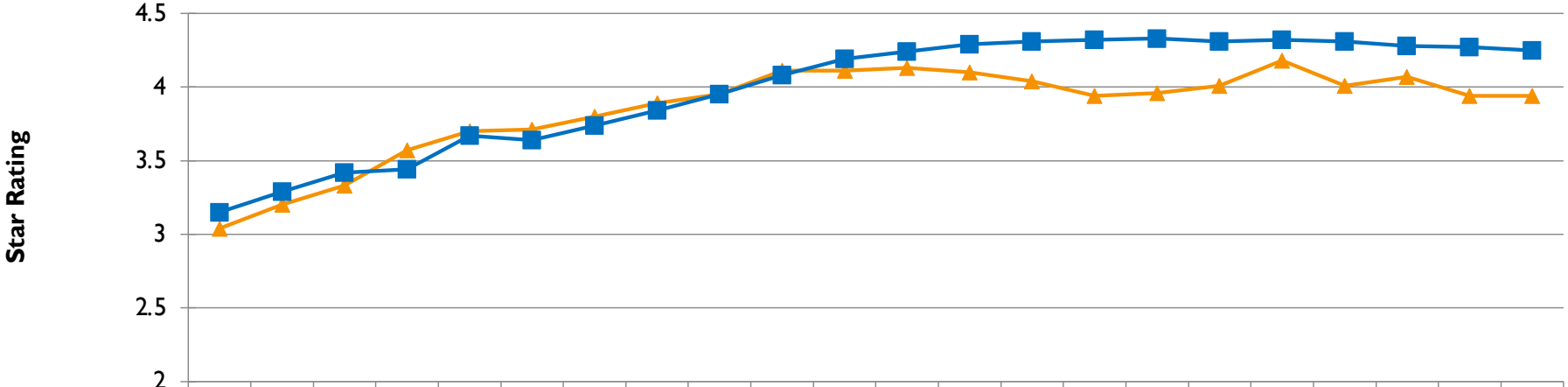
  1) Staff Education

  2) Program Standards

- Program standards are measured by NC Division of Child Development and Early Education using the Environment Rating Scale assessment every three years.
- Religious-sponsored programs (GS110s) do not receive a rating, unless they choose to apply.
- The QRIS system is voluntary. Licensed facilities may choose to opt-out and receive a one-star rating.
- **QRIS is undergoing a modernization process in 2025, including several new licensure pathways.**



Average Star Rating - All Children

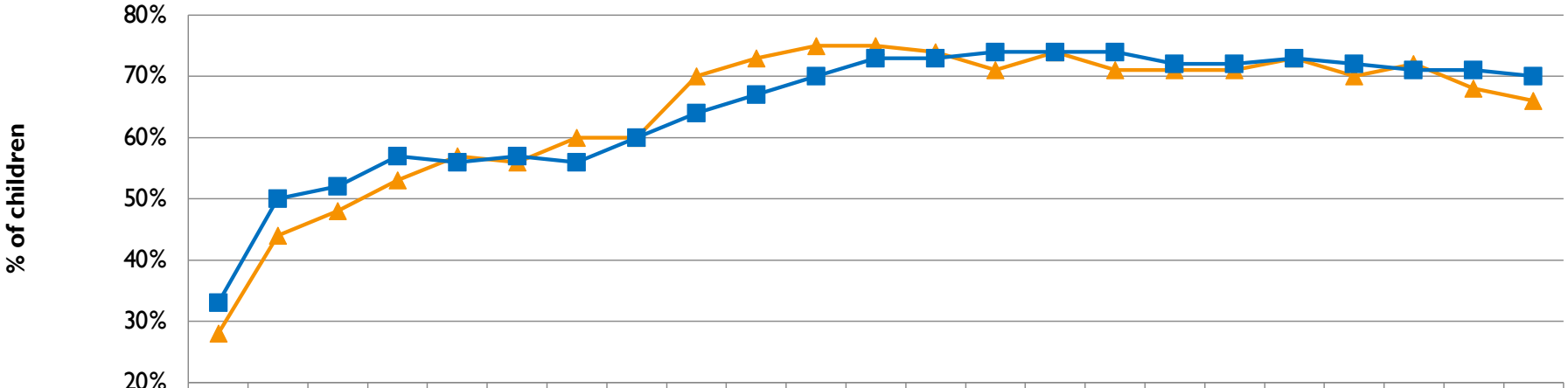


	FY 2002-03	FY 2003-04	FY 2004-05	FY 2005-06	FY 2006-07	FY 2007-08	FY 2008-09	FY 2009-10	FY 2010-11	FY 2011-12	FY 2012-13	FY 2013-14	FY 2014-15	FY 2015-16	FY 2016-17	FY 2017-18	FY 2018-19	FY 2019-20	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24
Buncombe	3.04	3.2	3.33	3.57	3.7	3.71	3.8	3.89	3.95	4.11	4.11	4.13	4.1	4.04	3.94	3.96	4.01	4.18	4.01	4.07	3.94	3.94
NC	3.15	3.29	3.42	3.44	3.67	3.64	3.74	3.84	3.95	4.08	4.19	4.24	4.29	4.31	4.32	4.33	4.31	4.32	4.31	4.28	4.27	4.25

CHILD CARE QUALITY

PLA40a – Buncombe falls below the minimum standard

Children in High Quality Care - All Children



	FY 2001-02	FY 2002-03	FY 2003-04	FY 2004-05	FY 2005-06	FY 2006-07	FY 2007-08	FY 2008-09	FY 2009-10	FY 2010-11	FY 2011-12	FY 2012-13	FY 2013-14	FY 2014-15	FY 2015-16	FY 2016-17	FY 2017-18	FY 2018-19	FY 2019-20	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24
Buncombe	28%	44%	48%	53%	57%	56%	60%	60%	70%	73%	75%	75%	74%	71%	74%	71%	71%	71%	73%	70%	72%	68%	66%
NC	33%	50%	52%	57%	56%	57%	56%	60%	64%	67%	70%	73%	73%	74%	74%	74%	72%	72%	73%	72%	71%	71%	70%

CHILD CARE QUALITY

PLA40b – Buncombe falls below the minimum standard



HOW TO FIND CARE?

Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) website

https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/childcaresearch

Mountain Child Care Connections

877-752-5955 and online search

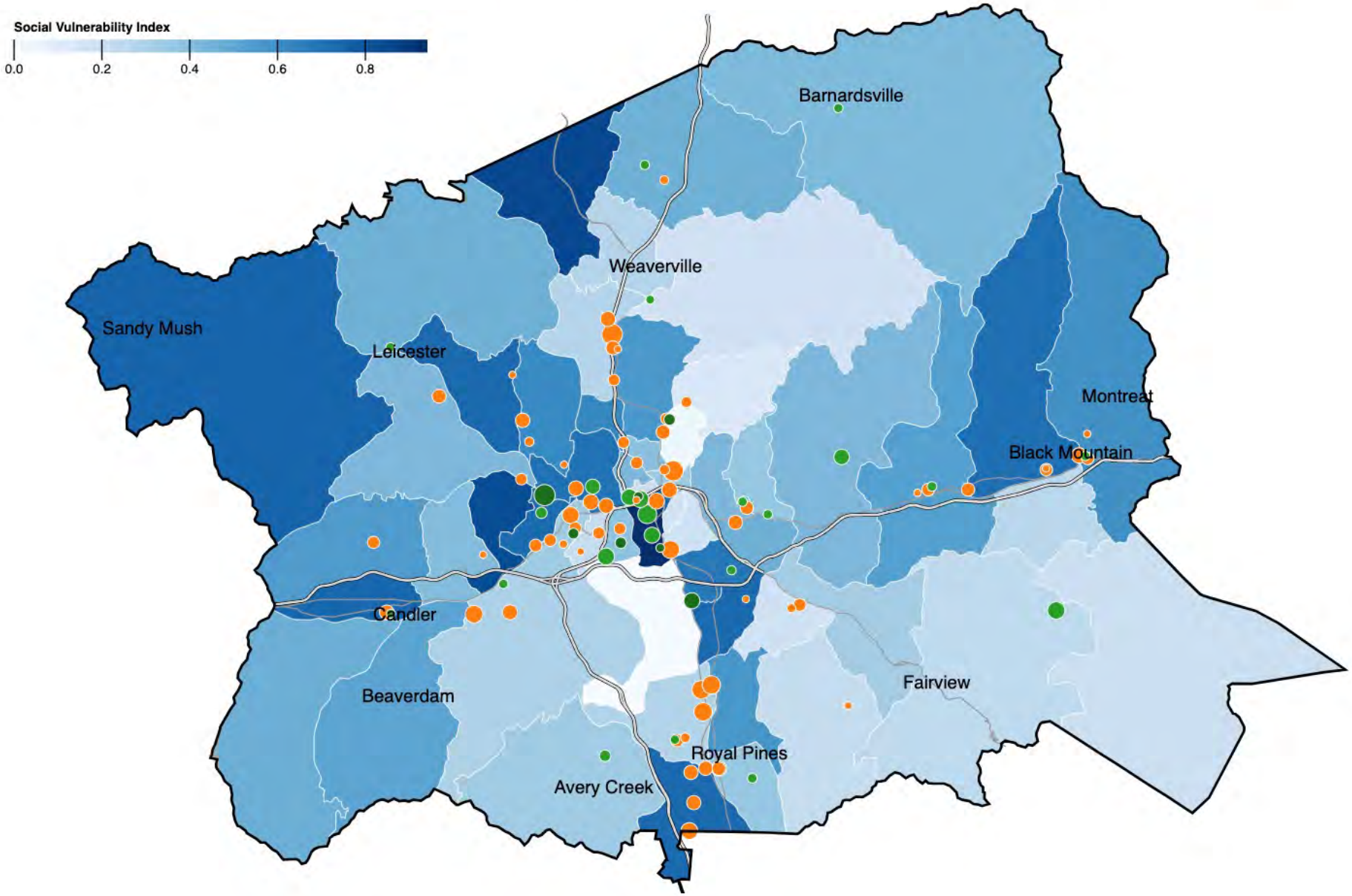
Buncombe Pre-K

Word of mouth/ recommendations from friends and family

Background: Choose how to shade the background:
(•) SVI ( ) Econ ( ) Kids ( ) Poverty ( ) Food
( ) Spanish speaking ( ) Black residents
( ) Hispanic residents

Layers: Unfunded ECE (●) sites are always shown; select other layers to show below.
[x] ● Unfunded ECE [x] ● Funded ECE
[x] ● Dev Day ECE [x] Towns [x] Roads
[ ] ART Routes [ ] ● Elementary schools
[ ] ● Public housing

Filter unfunded sites
Min star rating: 1
Max bus dist: 4
Min SVI: 0
Min % Econ Disadvantaged: 0

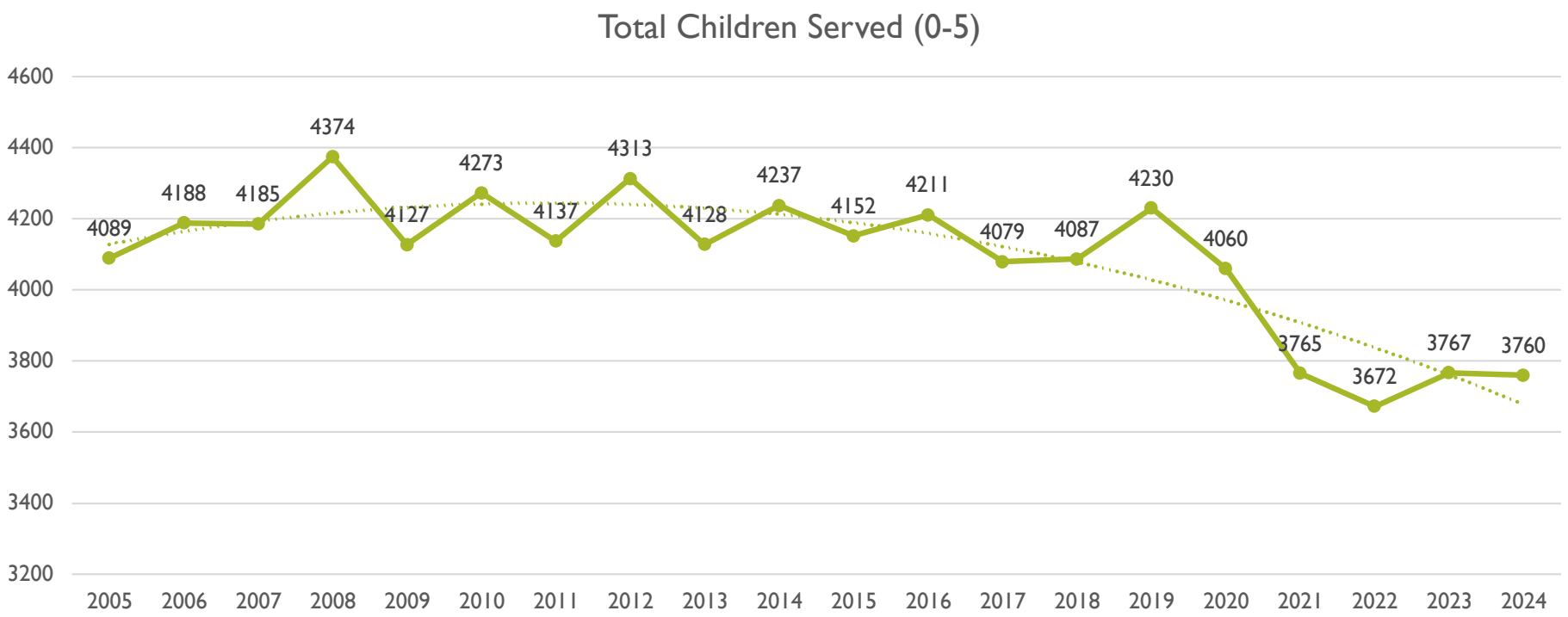


	Center			Home					
Report Date	Employees	Children Served	# of facilities	Employees	Children Served	# of facilities	**Total Employees**	**Total Children**	**Total Facilities**
Sep-05	860	6261	125	63	292	47	**923**	**6553**	**172**
Sep-06	788	5041	121	57	281	48	**845**	**5322**	**169**
Sep-07	938	5583	120	51	248	43	**989**	**5831**	**163**
Sep-08	1144	5753	117	44	247	44	**1188**	**6000**	**161**
Sep-09	1057	5761	116	47	235	38	**1104**	**5996**	**154**
Sep-10	1028	5666	114	38	221	34	**1066**	**5887**	**148**
Sep-11	994	5444	113	43	213	33	**1037**	**5657**	**146**
Sep-12	1043	5720	113	49	210	34	**1092**	**5930**	**147**
Sep-13	1010	5432	109	40	186	30	**1050**	**5618**	**139**
Sep-14	1087	5521	108	44	192	31	**1131**	**5713**	**139**
Sep-15	1003	5380	106	41	166	27	**1044**	**5546**	**133**
Sep-16	1101	5408	107	37	161	27	**1138**	**5569**	**134**
Sep-17	984	5376	105	27	130	21	**1011**	**5506**	**126**
Sep-18	995	5282	101	18	97	16	**1013**	**5379**	**117**
Sep-19	1008	5497	99	17	81	15	**1025**	**5578**	**114**
Sep-20	927	5239	99	16	79	14	**943**	**5318**	**113**
Sep-21	848	4971	101	14	59	13	**862**	**5030**	**114**
Sep-22	823	4637	100	13	62	11	**836**	**4699**	**111**
Sep-23	980	4640	99	11	60	11	**991**	**4700**	**110**
Sep-24	1033	4840	99	7	51	7	**1040**	**4891**	**106**

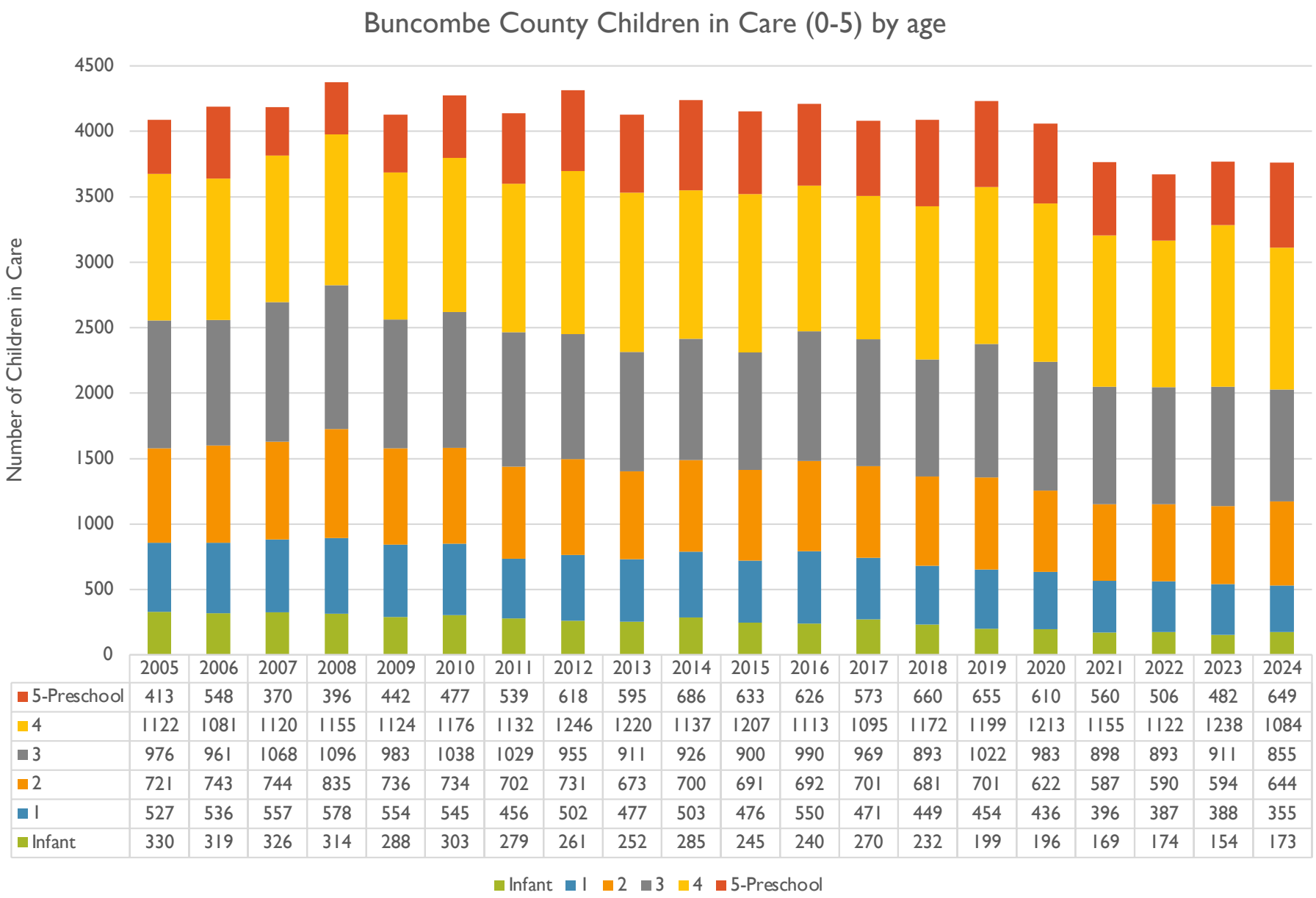
AVAILABILITY OVER TIME - LICENSED FACILITIES (AGES 0-12)



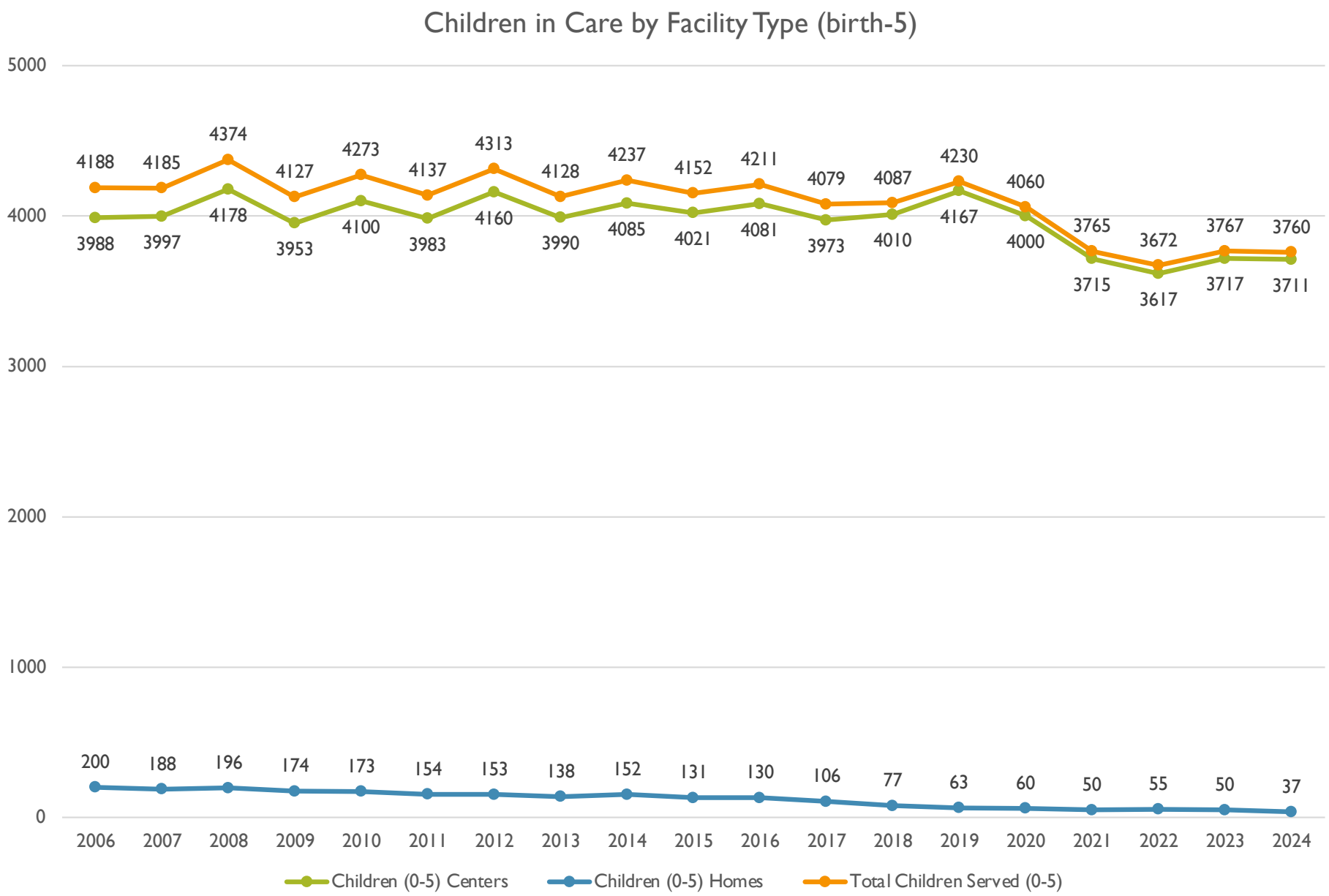
BUNCOMBE LICENSED FACILITIES (AGES 0-12)



BUNCOMBE ENROLLMENT OVER TIME IN LICENSED FACILITIES (AGES 0-5)



	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
5-Preschool	413	548	370	396	442	477	539	618	595	686	633	626	573	660	655	610	560	506	482	649
4	1122	1081	1120	1155	1124	1176	1132	1246	1220	1137	1207	1113	1095	1172	1199	1213	1155	1122	1238	1084
3	976	961	1068	1096	983	1038	1029	955	911	926	900	990	969	893	1022	983	898	893	911	855
2	721	743	744	835	736	734	702	731	673	700	691	692	701	681	701	622	587	590	594	644
1	527	536	557	578	554	545	456	502	477	503	476	550	471	449	454	436	396	387	388	355
Infant	330	319	326	314	288	303	279	261	252	285	245	240	270	232	199	196	169	174	154	173


Children in Care by Facility Type (birth-5)
5000
4000
3000
2000
1000
0
4188 4185 4374 4127 4273 4137 4313 4128 4237 4152 4211 4079 4087 4230 4060 3765 3672 3767 3760
3988 3997 4178 3953 4100 3983 4160 3990 4085 4021 4081 3973 4010 4167 4000 3715 3617 3717 3711
200 188 196 174 173 154 153 138 152 131 130 106 77 63 60 50 55 50 37
2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023 2024
Children (0-5) Centers
Children (0-5) Homes
Total Children Served (0-5)

SLOTS AVAILABLE BY SHIFT

More and more parents are finding employment that doesn't adhere to the standard Monday-Friday, 9-to-5 work schedule. Besides working outside of normal business hours, a subsection of these parents may also work hours that vary week to week. Despite the growing need for nonstandard-hours care, there has been very little research on how states and communities are supporting families in this situation.

In Buncombe County:

3 family child care homes are licensed to serve a total of **24** children during second shift

0 family child care homes are licensed to serve children during third shift.

During the month of May 2025 the most recent report available, **NO five- to twelve-year-old** children were being served with second shift care.



AFFORDABILITY

- In Buncombe County, the average annual cost of 5-star center based care for an infant is $13,656 and $12,915 in a family child care home (2025).
- There are several options to help families pay for care if they meet income eligibility and other guidelines, including Early Head Start, Head Start, NC Pre-Kindergarten, and child care subsidies (buncombepfc.org/childcare/).
- Parents receiving child care subsidies must pay parent fees of 10% of family gross income and the difference between the voucher reimbursement rate and the advertised cost of the slot, or the differential rate. This is a barrier to families for payment and a barrier to centers for collection.
- Wrap-around care (extended hours before or after the official program hours) is an additional cost to families and may not be available depending on the program site, sometimes making care difficult for working parents.

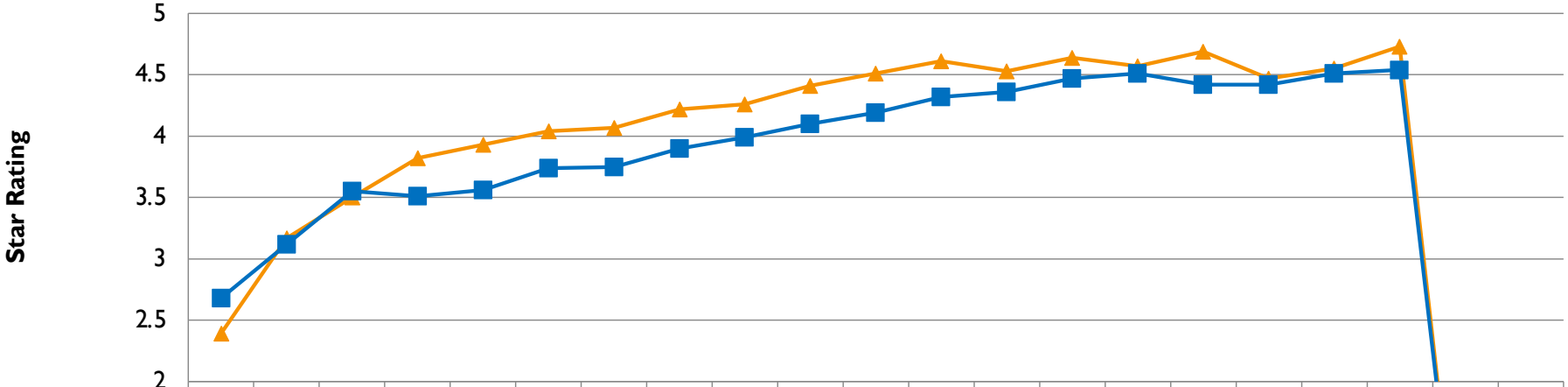


Facility	Age Served	One Star	Two Star	Three Star	Four Star	Five Star
Child Care Center	Infant-Toddler Rate	$ 379	$ 398	$ 876	$ 960	$ 1100
	2 Year Old Rate	$ 356	$ 374	$ 844	$ 998	$ 1014
	3-5 Year Old Rate	$ 335	$ 351	$ 927	$ 958	$ 989
Family Child Care Home	Infant Rate	$ 379	$ 398	$ 909	$ 919	$1,022
	1 Year Old Rate	$ 379	$ 398	$ 867	$ 891	$1,023
	2 Year Old Rate	$ 356	$ 374	$ 877	$ 886	$ 904
	3-5 Year Old Rate	$ 335	$ 351	$ 867	$ 868	$ 957

BUNCOMBE SUBSIDY MARKET RATES (AS OF OCT 1, 2023)

Most recent available

Average Star Rating - Subsidy

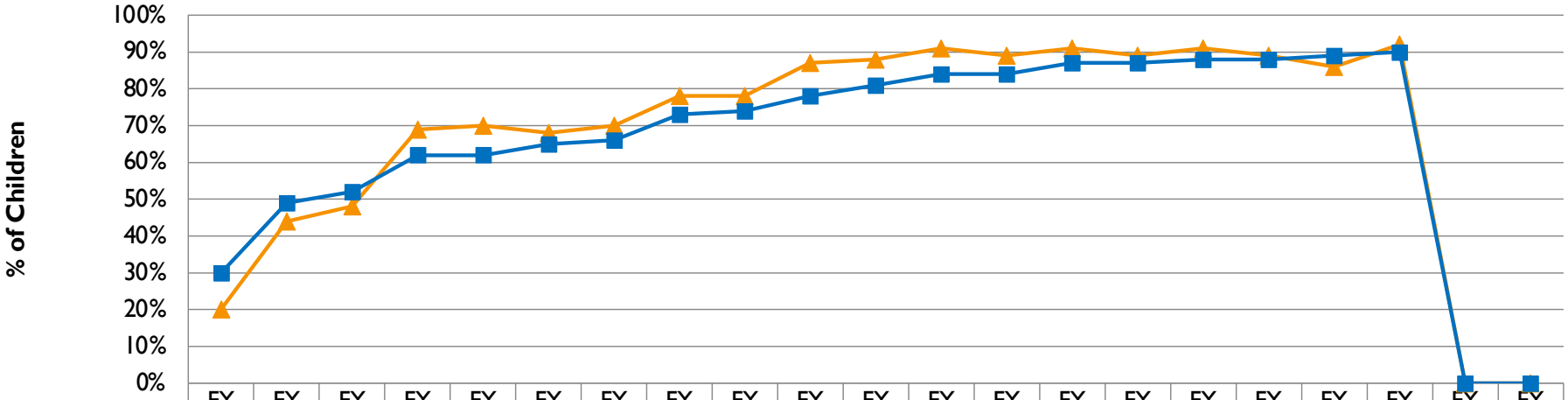


	FY 2001-02	FY 2002-03	FY 2003-04	FY 2004-05	FY 2005-06	FY 2006-07	FY 2007-08	FY 2008-09	FY 2009-10	FY 2010-11	FY 2011-12	FY 2012-13	FY 2013-14	FY 2014-15	FY 2015-16	FY 2016-17	FY 2017-18	FY 2018-19	FY 2019-20	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22
Buncombe	2.39	3.17	3.5	3.82	3.93	4.04	4.07	4.22	4.26	4.41	4.51	4.61	4.53	4.64	4.57	4.69	4.47	4.55	4.73	0	0
NC	2.68	3.12	3.55	3.51	3.56	3.74	3.75	3.9	3.99	4.1	4.19	4.32	4.36	4.47	4.51	4.42	4.42	4.51	4.54	0	0

CHILD CARE QUALITY

PLA50a – Buncombe data is not available past FY 19-20

Subsidy - % of children served in High Quality Care



	FY 2001-02	FY 2002-03	FY 2003-04	FY 2004-05	FY 2005-06	FY 2006-07	FY 2007-08	FY 2008-09	FY 2009-10	FY 2010-11	FY 2011-12	FY 2012-13	FY 2013-14	FY 2014-15	FY 2015-16	FY 2016-17	FY 2017-18	FY 2018-19	FY 2019-20	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22
Buncombe	20%	44%	48%	69%	70%	68%	70%	78%	78%	87%	88%	91%	89%	91%	89%	91%	89%	86%	92%	0%	0%
NC	30%	49%	52%	62%	62%	65%	66%	73%	74%	78%	81%	84%	84%	87%	87%	88%	88%	89%	90%	0%	0%

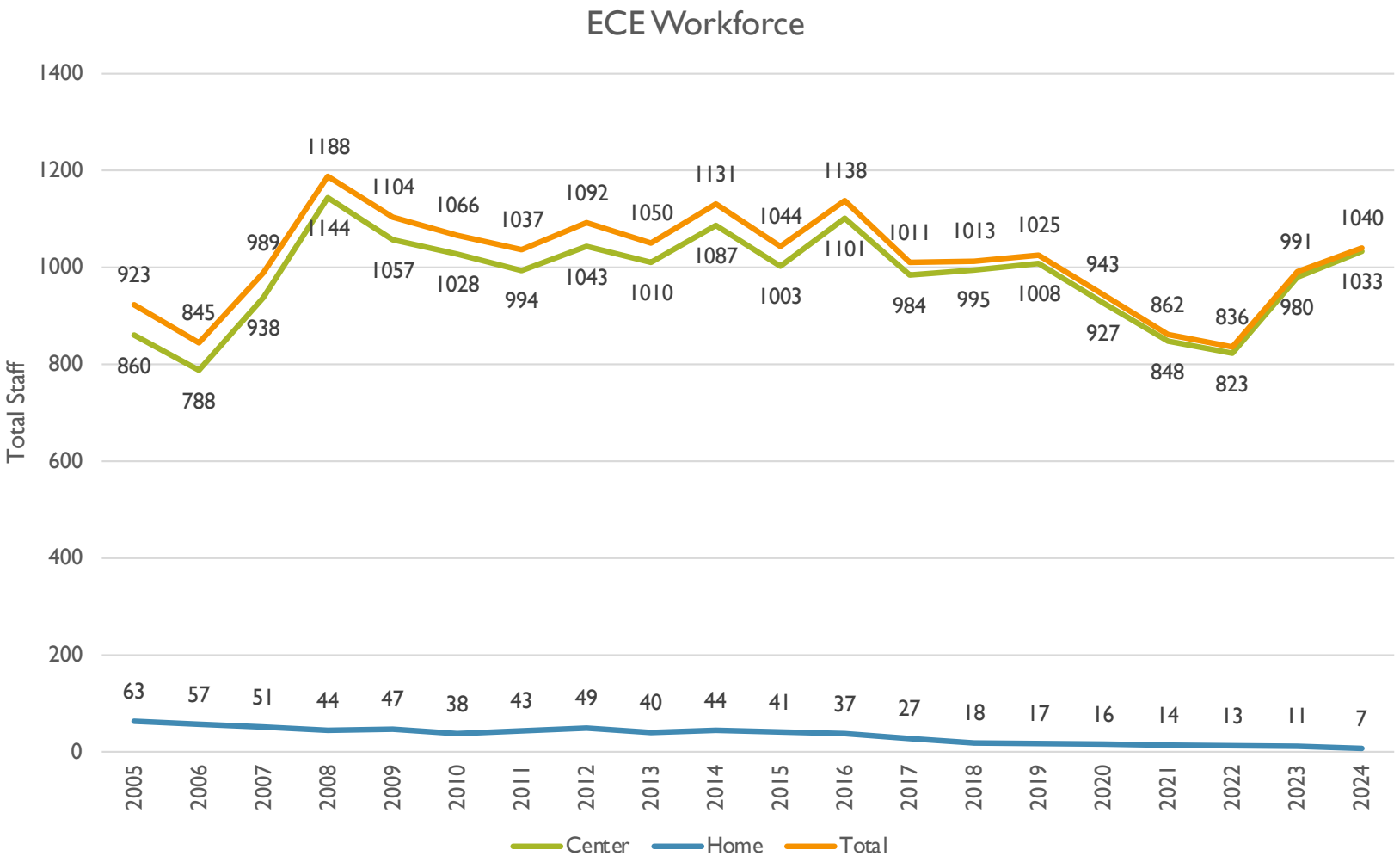
CHILD CARE QUALITY

PLA50b – Buncombe data is not available past FY 19-20

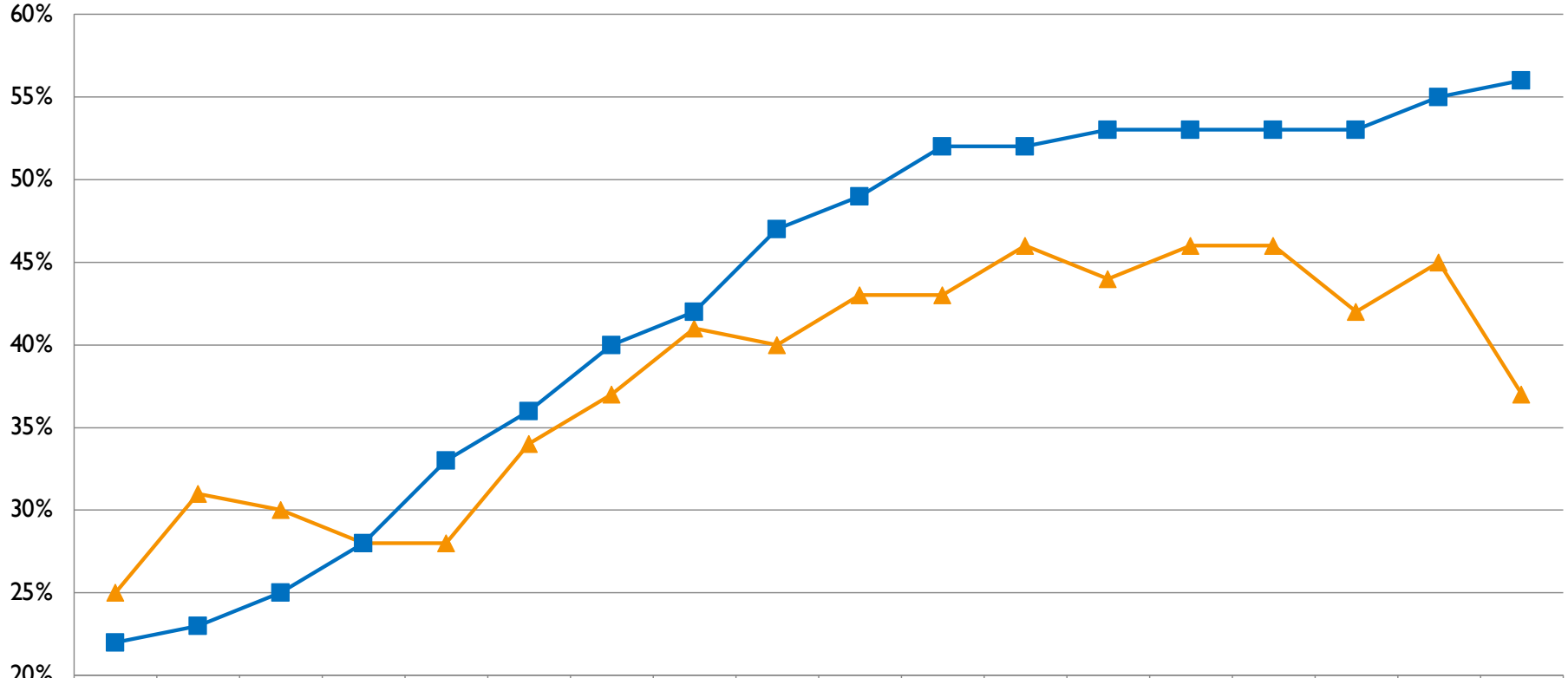


THE BUNCOMBE WORKFORCE

- Number of teachers = 839
- Number of administrators = 86
- Number of support staff = 68
- The starting wage for teachers in Buncombe County is $16/hr. with the highest salary at $20/hr.
- The starting wage for assistant teachers in Buncombe County is $15/hr. with the highest salary at $17/hr.
- WAGE$ salary supplement program participants = 143 teacher/administrators in 62 facilities
- Turnover rate of WAGE$ recipients = 15%
- TEACH Early Childhood scholarship program = 72 participants in 35 facilities
- Facilities receiving unrestricted Smart Start grants from Buncombe Partnership for Children to maintain high quality = 61


ECE Workforce
Total Staff
1400
1200
1000
800
600
400
200
0
923
845
788
860
938
989
1144
1188
1104
1057
1066
1028
1037
994
1092
1043
1050
1010
1131
1087
1044
1003
1138
1101
1011
984
1013
995
1025
1008
943
927
862
848
836
823
980
991
1033
1040
63
57
51
44
47
38
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2005
2006
2007
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2022
2023
2024
Center
Home
Total

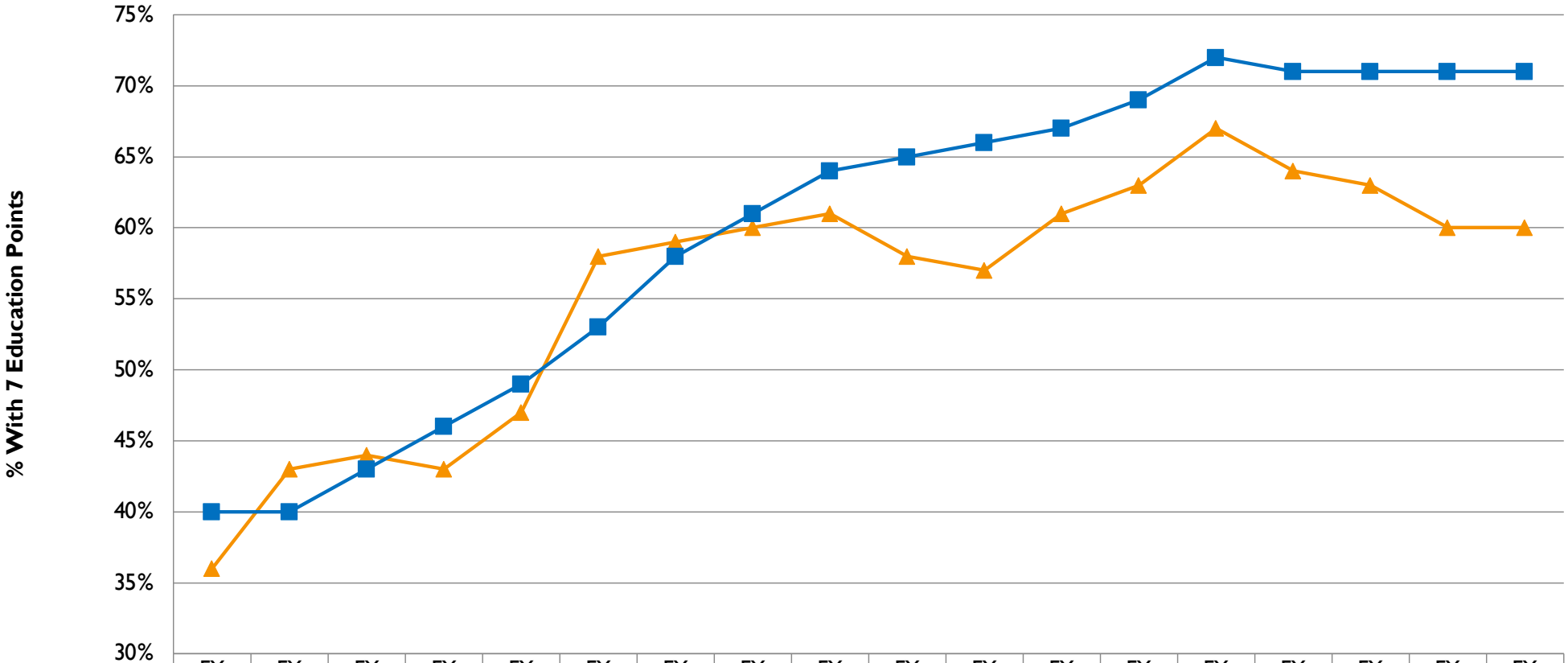
Lead Teacher Education



	FY 2006-07	FY 2007-08	FY 2008-09	FY 2009-10	FY 2010-11	FY 2011-12	FY 2012-13	FY 2013-14	FY 2014-15	FY 2015-16	FY 2016-17	FY 2017-18	FY 2018-19	FY 2019-20	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24
Buncombe	25%	31%	30%	28%	28%	34%	37%	41%	40%	43%	43%	46%	44%	46%	46%	42%	45%	37%
NC	22%	23%	25%	28%	33%	36%	40%	42%	47%	49%	52%	52%	53%	53%	53%	53%	55%	56%

- EDU10 – Percent of children enrolled in 1-5 star centers that have at least 75% of lead teachers with associate's degrees. Buncombe falls below the minimum standard.

Administrator Education



	FY 2006-07	FY 2007-08	FY 2008-09	FY 2009-10	FY 2010-11	FY 2011-12	FY 2012-13	FY 2013-14	FY 2014-15	FY 2015-16	FY 2016-17	FY 2017-18	FY 2018-19	FY 2019-20	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24
Buncombe	36%	43%	44%	43%	47%	58%	59%	60%	61%	58%	57%	61%	63%	67%	64%	63%	60%	60%
NC	40%	40%	43%	46%	49%	53%	58%	61%	64%	65%	66%	67%	69%	72%	71%	71%	71%	71%

- EDU20 –Percent of children enrolled in 1-5 star centers that have directors with college degrees. Buncombe meets minimum standard.

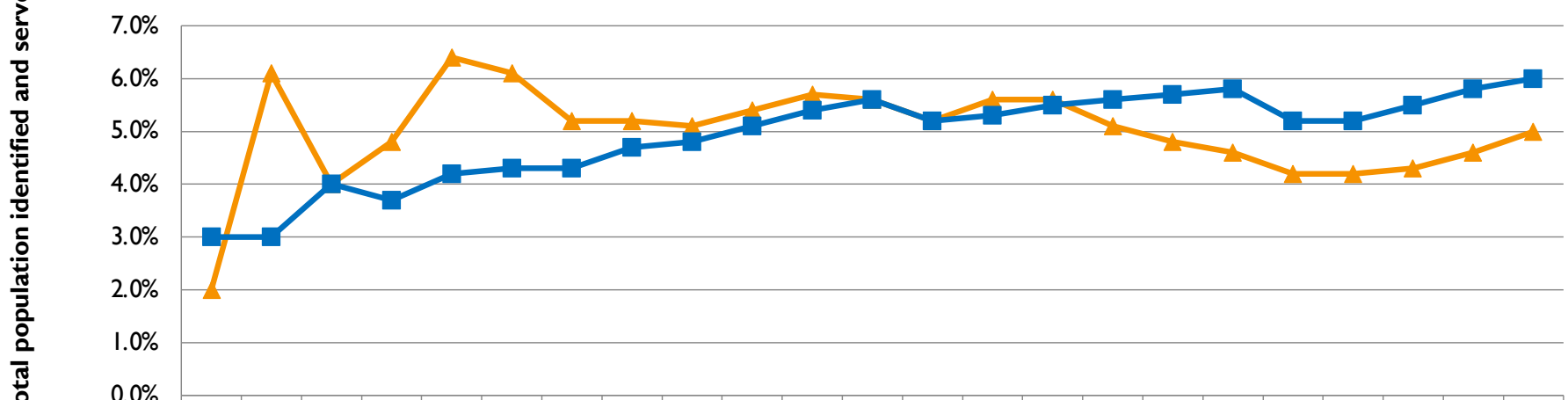


CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL HEALTHCARE NEEDS

A variety of support programs are available for families based on child eligibility and age, including:

- Children's Developmental Services Agency
- Exceptional Children's Program
- Child Care Health Consultants
- The SUNSHINE Project
- Family Support Network

Early Intervention (ages 0-2)

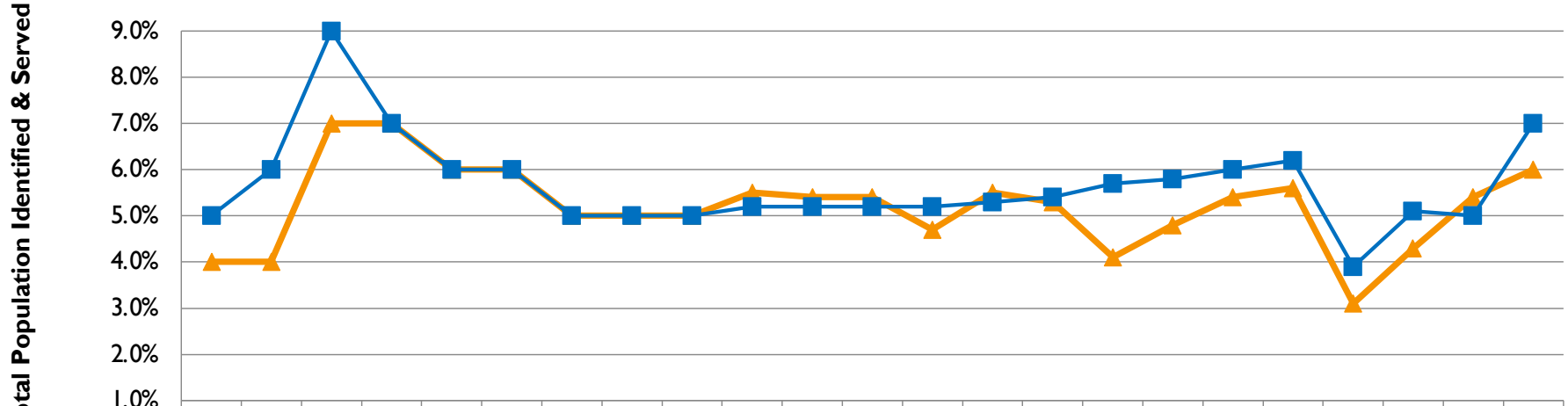


	FY 2001-02	FY 2002-03	FY 2003-04	FY 2004-05	FY 2005-06	FY 2006-07	FY 2007-08	FY 2008-09	FY 2009-10	FY 2010-11	FY 2011-12	FY 2012-13	FY 2013-14	FY 2014-15	FY 2015-16	FY 2016-17	FY 2017-18	FY 2018-19	FY 2019-20	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24
Buncombe	2.0%	6.1%	4.0%	4.8%	6.4%	6.1%	5.2%	5.2%	5.1%	5.4%	5.7%	5.6%	5.2%	5.6%	5.6%	5.1%	4.8%	4.6%	4.2%	4.2%	4.3%	4.6%	5.0%
NC	3.0%	3.0%	4.0%	3.7%	4.2%	4.3%	4.3%	4.7%	4.8%	5.1%	5.4%	5.6%	5.2%	5.3%	5.5%	5.6%	5.7%	5.8%	5.2%	5.2%	5.5%	5.8%	6.0%

HEALTH

H10a – Buncombe is within the expected range

Early Intervention (ages 3-5)



	FY 2001-02	FY 2002-03	FY 2003-04	FY 2004-05	FY 2005-06	FY 2006-07	FY 2007-08	FY 2008-09	FY 2009-10	FY 2010-11	FY 2011-12	FY 2012-13	FY 2013-14	FY 2014-15	FY 2015-16	FY 2016-17	FY 2017-18	FY 2018-19	FY 2019-20	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24
Buncombe	4.0%	4.0%	7.0%	7.0%	6.0%	6.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.5%	5.4%	5.4%	4.7%	5.5%	5.3%	4.1%	4.8%	5.4%	5.6%	3.1%	4.3%	5.4%	6.0%
NC	5.0%	6.0%	9.0%	7.0%	6.0%	6.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.2%	5.2%	5.2%	5.2%	5.3%	5.4%	5.7%	5.8%	6.0%	6.2%	3.9%	5.1%	5.0%	7.0%

HEALTH

H10b – Buncombe is within the expected range

RESOURCES

- NCDHHS Division of Child Development & Early Education
- NC Partnership for Children (Smart Start)
- NC Early Childhood Foundation
- NC Early Education Coalition
- NC Child
- NC Association for the Education of Young Children
- NC Childcare Resource & Referral Council:
  - Southwestern Child Development Commission
  - Childcare Resources, Inc.
  - The Early Years *(WAGE$, T.E.A.C.H. & Infant-Toddler Awards Program)*



QUESTIONS?



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Buncombe Partnership for Children