Early Childhood Education & Development Committee
October 7, 2025, 1:00 – 2:30 pm
200 College St, Room 310

MINUTES

Attendees: Adrian Sandler, Al Whitesides, Beth Sherman, Carol Steen, Emily Nicholson, Heather Zanzig, Jennifer Horton (virtual), Jo Jamison (virtual), Maia Sloan (virtual), Martin Moore, Pat Tuttle, Sara Lappe, Sarah Kabourek, Stacy Anderson

Staff in attendance: Rachael Sawyer, Amy Broughton, Angelica Tyler, Tim Love, Angelyn Johnson

Welcome

- All committee members introduced themselves and provided a brief summary of their background.

Minutes

- Approval of minutes from September 2, 2025
    - Motion to approve by Al Whitesides. Seconded by Adrian Sandler. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Old Business

- There was no old business.

New Business

- Funding Strategy
    - Presentation by Buncombe Partnership for Children included:
        - Current State of Child Care
            - Impacting classrooms
            - Impacting finances
            - Impacting families
        - Teacher and Director Turnover
        - Mental and Behavioral Health Supports
        - Loss of DCDEE Stabilization Grants
        - Shifts in 3- and 4-year-old slots
        - Buncombe NC Pre-K Enrollment
        - The Child Care Benefits Cliff
        - Which families get access to child care?
        - Dispersed Investments vs Focused Investments
        - Recommended Focused Funding Priorities
        - Potential Impacts
        - What about need for infant care?
    - Committee discussion included:
        - How to gather some of the missing data (i.e. true demand for care)
        - Creating a 3-year strategic plan

    - Consider multi-year plan to implement
    - Timeline for decisions
    - Need to look at what we already learned from previous input and not repeat the same questions when gathering community input because community members have survey fatigue.
- Community Engagement
    - Site visits/listening tour
        - Ideas for questions to ask funded organizations:
            - What behavioral supports are they utilizing?
            - What is their perceived demand and enrollment challenges?
            - What are the short term and long-term issues they are facing?
            - What are their funding sources/funding mix?
            - What are their teacher needs and recruitment strategies?
            - How would a shift in the committee's funding strategy impact their ability to operate?
            - What are their thoughts on the proposed funding strategy for 3-year-olds vs other needs?
    - Other community input:
        - Input from families
        - Input from all childcare providers, including the ones not funded
        - Business input (consider Chamber member survey)
    - Roundtable of experts:
        - Panel discussion will be held during the November meeting.
        - Panelists to be invited include:
            - Samantha Cole, NC Dept of Commerce
            - Candace Witherspoon, NC DCDEE
            - Greg Borom, WNC Early Childhood Coalition
            - A representative from NC Child
            - Phillip Hardin, Buncombe County HHS (Subsidy)
            - Amy Barry, Buncombe Partnership for Children
        - The committee would like to learn:
            - Shifts in challenges since the pandemic.
            - Regional challenges
            - Pending state level policy of legislation changes
    - Staff will send out a link for committee members to provide suggested questions to be included in the surveys and for the panelists.

Announcements

- Future committee meetings will be held in Room 310 due to a scheduling conflict in the ground floor conference room.

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Public Comment

- Brian Repass and Amy Barry participated in public comment.

Next Meeting

Next meeting will be November 4, 2025, 1:00-2:30 pm, 200 College St, Room 310.