

Early Childhood and Development Committee

Update for Buncombe County Board of Commissioners

About Us

Members

Al Whitesides
Martin Moore, Chair
Jennifer Horton
Dr. Adrian Sandler, Vice-Chair
Beth Sherman
Carol Steen, Secretary
Emily Nicholson
Heather Zanzig
Jo Jamison
Maia Sloan
Pat Tuttle
Dr. Sara Lappe
Dr. Sarah Kabourek
Stacy Anderson

Purpose

The purpose of the Early Childhood and Development Committee is to engage with community partners, solicit public input and make policy and funding recommendations to the Board of Commissioners for Buncombe County's Early Childhood Education and Development Fund.

FUNDING STRATEGIES

Support early care & education for children birth through kindergarten with an emphasis on pre-kindergarten:

- Develop early childhood **workforce**
- Maintain/enhance existing **slots**
- Increase **slots** for enrollment
- Increase **quality**
- Support **families**
- Enhance effectiveness of overall **system**



Financial Update

	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025	FY2026
Budgeted Amount	$3,745,440	$3,820,349	$3,896,756	$3,974,691	$3,974,691
# Projects	21	22	21	15	13
# Funded Agencies	12	17	16	10	10

- Unexpended funds are re-granted
- $236,797 current fund balance
  - Carry-forward from previous years

FY2026 GRANTEES

Fiscal Year July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026

- AB Tech
- Buncombe County Schools Learning Labs
- Buncombe Partnership for Children
- Community Action Opportunities
- FIRSTwnc
- Irene Wortham Center
- Swannanoa Valley Child Care Council (Donald S Collins Center)
- The Christine Avery Learning Center
- Verner
- YWCA



Example Uses of Funds



- Apprenticeship Program
- Behavioral health support
- Classroom supplies and furnishings
- Curriculum, assessments & licensing
- Literacy Support
- Outreach & parent engagement
- Parent Engagement & Activities
- Recruitment
- Student nutrition
- Teacher pay
- Technology
- Workforce development for existing & new professionals

Focused Investment Plan

- Since forming in 2019, this committee has directed annual investments of funds in a blend of projects across various priority areas
- The committee has voted to undertake a project to define & implement a new focused funding strategy that:
  - Aligns with Commissioner resolution to establish Early Childhood Development Fund in Buncombe County
  - Maximizes local government opportunity to influence positive outcomes within the system of early care and education
  - Responds to current conditions within the field of early care & education
  - Is informed by community input
  - Builds on results-to-date
  - Is grounded in best practices from other communities
  - Maximizes impact & sustainability

Focused Investment Project

- Operate a regular grant cycle for FY2027 (applications due in February & grant funds available July 1, 2026 – 2027)
- Gather & analyze data on local needs, gaps & priorities
- Engage impacted populations
- Establish funding priorities
- Design scope(s) for new focus areas, including costs and performance measures
- Develop a multi-year funding and implementation plan
- Launch new focused funding strategy for FY2028 (as of July 1, 2027)

Follow Along with Our Work

Buncombenc.gov/Grants

Monthly Meetings

- Held the first Tuesdays at 1:00
- Open to the public including public comment opportunity
- Also livestreamed on Public Input website

FY2027 Grant Application

- Opens January 5, 2026