Early Childhood Education Committee

May 5, 2026

Agenda

12:00 - 12:15	**Lunch**
12:15 - 12:25	**Focused Investment Plan Background:** presentation
12:25 – 12:35	**Framing the Future State:** discussion
12:35 – 12:40	**Potential Focused Investments:** presentation
12:40 – 1:10	**Making the Case:** table discussion
1:10 – 1:40	**Making the Case:** report-out
1:40 – 2:00	**Q&A:** discussion
2:00 – 2:15	**Ideas with Momentum:** discussion
2:15 – 2:20	**Next Steps:** presentation
2:20 – 2:30	**Public Comment**

Focused Investment Plan

The purpose of this project is to define and implement a new focused funding strategy that:

- Aligns with Buncombe County Board of Commissioners Resolution to Create an Early Childhood Education and Development Fund
- 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

Project Objectives

- Gather and analyze data on local needs, gaps and priorities
- Review models for local government investment in early care & education
- Engage impacted populations (families, providers, business community)
- Establish funding priorities (continued and/or new)
- Determine performance measures
- Develop a multi-year funding and implementation plan

Project Timeline



Aug 2024
Project launched

Aug 2025
Project relaunched post-Helene

May-June 2026
Determine focus area(s) to be scoped

July-Dec 2026
Design program scope(s)

Jan-June 2027
Identify contractor(s) for new focused funding

July 2027
Begin new funding

Resource Information

Materials provided in packet and at tables:

- **Buncombe County Child Care Survey:** Findings from the 2026 family survey regarding child care, child development & parenting
- **A Systematic Best-Practice Manual for Funding Touchstones**: Master of Public Affairs Capstone Project by Sarah Tisinger
- **NC ELI & mClass Overview:** Kindergarten readiness data by Asheville and Buncombe County Schools and Buncombe County Strategy & Innovation

Framing the Future State

- **Current state:** Funding a wide variety of projects under 5 broad strategies
- **Future state:** Focused investment project commits to implementing a new focused funding strategy
- Could look like…
  - 2 major focus areas and a smaller amount for other ideas (40%, 40%, 20%)
  - 3 focus areas funded equally (33%, 33%, 33%)
  - Custom funding processes depending on focus area
  - What else?

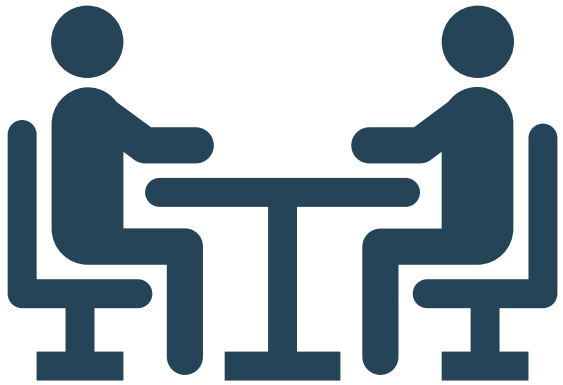
Potential Focused Investment Categories

- **Local Supplements to State/Federal Programs:** Invest funds to augment state and/or federal child care programs to extend and enhance impact
- **Subsidized Child Care Models:** Invest funds to establish & operate local program(s) to provide subsidized child care for children that don't qualify under existing state/federal programs
- **Behavioral Health:** Invest in mental/behavioral health support services to enhance early childhood education and development
- **Workforce:** Invest in programs that enhance the workforce of professionals in early childhood education, including teachers and staff
- **Miscellaneous:** Investment ideas not fitting into one of the above groupings

Potential Focused Investments

- **Local Supplements to State/Federal Programs**
  1) NC Pre-K Enhancement
  2) Child Care Subsidy Enhancement
  3) Head Start Local Match
- **Subsidized Child Care Models**
  4) Pre-k Slots
  5) 3-Year-Old Slots
  6) Infant & Toddler Slots
- **Behavioral Health**
  7) Teacher Mental Health
  8) Behavioral Health for Children
- **Workforce**
  9) Grants for Workforce Programs
  10) Teacher & Staff Supplements
  11) Child Care for Child Care Professionals
  12) Community of Professionalism
- **Miscellaneous**
  13) Child Care Provider Supplements
  14) Parenting Support
  15) Family, Friend & Neighbor Care
  16) Innovation Grants

Making the Case



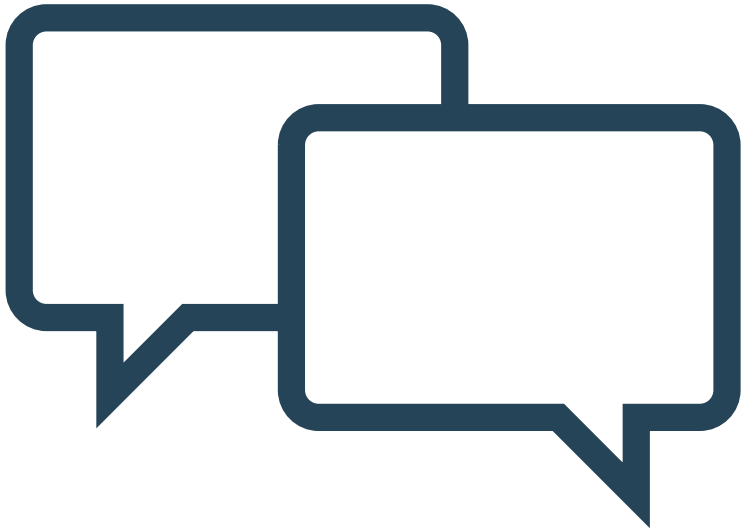
- **Purpose:** Have a robust discussion of each potential strategy area, exploring considerations of each
- **Assignment:**
  - Each table is assigned a focus area w/ potential investment ideas
  - Discuss your category & investment ideas
  - Prepare a short presentation back to the group describing your category and making the case for why this should be a priority area and why maybe it's not the top priority

Report-out



- Local Supplements to State/Fed Programs
- Subsidized Child Care Models
- Behavioral Health
- Workforce
- Miscellaneous

Q&A



Ideas with Momentum

- Based on the case for funding the various focus areas and ideas, what is rising to the top for you?
- Committee members will be asked at the next meeting to share your opinions on future state (# of focus areas) and focus areas (what to focus on). What additional information do you need to equip you for that?

Next Steps

- **Homework for June Meeting:** Reflect on the conversation today and be ready to come back next month for a conversation about the future state (# of focus areas) and focus areas (what to focus on).
- **Other June Agenda Items:** Transition considerations, Plans for July-Dec, Committee member terms
- **Coming soon:** Engagement opportunities to hear from applicants/grantees on potential focused investments & transition plans, Future structure for public policy advocacy

Committee Member Terms

The following committee members have terms ending 6/30/26:

Eligible to apply for another term	Has reached term limit
• Adrian Sandler, MD • Emily Nicholson • Pat Tuttle • Sara Lappe, MD	• Carol Steen

With the currently vacant seat and these openings, we will be seeking to fill 2 to 6 seats with terms beginning 7/1/26