



Unlocking Local Dollars for Early Childhood in North Carolina

The Challenge

Communities are recognizing that building vibrant, desirable places for people to live and businesses to grow begins with ensuring each child has the opportunity to fulfill his or her potential.

They understand that their economic vitality is tied to how well young children are developing and thriving on outcomes that predict academic and career success.

For a strong foundation for future school and career success, children need health and development on track beginning at birth, supported and supportive families and communities and high quality birth-to-eight learning environments with regular attendance.

Current state and federal investments are not enough to meet communities' needs and that impact children, families and business.

\$8.3 billion

Annual lost wages of working families due to lack of child care¹

\$4.4 billion

Annual loss to U.S. businesses due to employee absenteeism as a result of child care issues²

¹ *The Cost of Work-Family Policy Inaction, 2016*. Center for American Progress

² *Parents and the High Cost of Childcare, 2016 Report*. Child Care Aware of America

Our Vision

North Carolina municipalities and counties leverage state and federal funding and make local investments to support the optimal development of children in their communities.

Municipalities and counties across the US are on the cutting edge of investing in early learning. Local revenue streams offer a means to expand early learning for communities, particularly as child populations are growing and demand for programs is increasing. In 2018, at least a half dozen communities across the country joined approximately 40 others in supporting local investments in young children. Investments range from expanding preschool to subsidizing child care to providing tax credits for parents, childcare programs and providers.

In North Carolina, local governments have the authority to invest in the education and well-being of their citizens and in the economic development of their communities. Wake and Mecklenburg counties already do so through annual county budgeting. In Durham, the County Commission, City Council and Public School Board has established a Community Early Education/Preschool Task Force to develop a plan to serve all three- and four-year olds in Durham County in high quality preschool by 2023. Buncombe, Forsyth and Mecklenburg counties also are studying further expansion of preschool. In 2018, the Mecklenburg County Commissioners approved a property tax increase to raise \$9 million to open 33 new public pre-kindergarten classrooms - called MECK Pre-K.

What We Do

In 2016, the North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation (NCECF) published a toolkit, the first of its kind in the nation, to support NC communities in pursuing local investments for early childhood. Our website - **Local Funding for Early Learning: A North Carolina Community Toolkit** - offers communities information on how local government works, the local budgeting process, funding streams, a community readiness assessment and case studies from across the country.

A five-member Advisory Council, representing business, economic development and local government provided expert consultation on the development and content of the toolkit. The toolkit is non-partisan and does not recommend any single approach to advancing local policy and funding mechanisms.

Since 2016, NCECF has hosted toolkit trainings for six communities - Buncombe, Durham, Forsyth, Guilford, Transylvania and Watauga counties - to understand what financial mechanisms are available to communities in North Carolina to generate local revenue, hear about initiatives across the country and assess their own readiness to pursue local financing. County Commissioners, Chambers of Commerce representatives, nonprofit and business leaders, foundations and public school and public housing leaders came together to learn and share their vision for young children in their communities.

In 2017, NCECF created a learning community for those NC communities working on local financing initiatives to share strategies and ideas as they move forward.

In Our Partners' Words

The toolkit is advancing policies that create a stronger NC today and tomorrow by supporting each child's birth-to-eight development.

"Communities are hungry for better ways to meet the needs of their children. There is a dearth of information on how to grow your resources locally. This toolkit provides such an excellent guide to those who care about North Carolina children. I wish every state had one! In the child and youth field we need to get better at understanding the flow of resources, the tax and budget process, and creative financing mechanisms in order to be more effective."

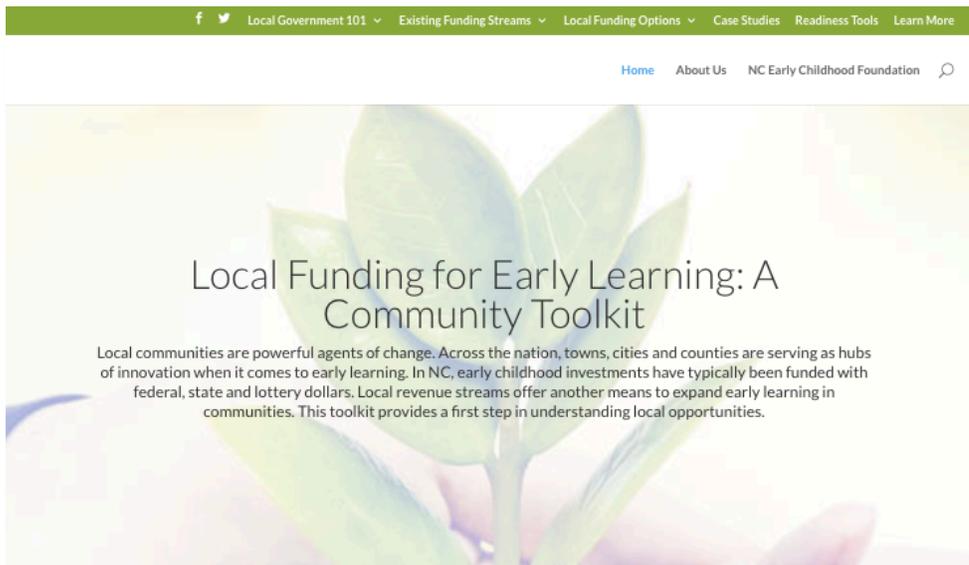
Elizabeth Gaines, Founder, The Children's Funding Project

"If your community is considering locally expanding early care and education services, the toolkit and workshop supplied by NCECF and the Budget and Tax Center is essential to your planning. Please take advantage of these wonderful resources. It will move the discussion forward!"

Jennie Eblen, Co-Chair, Asheville Buncombe Preschool Planning Collaborative

"The training was valuable because it put together different stakeholders to develop a strategy based in real knowledge of different ways to reach it, from the funding standpoint and making the case."

Pilar Rocha – Executive Director, El Centro Hispano



Our Impact

15,436

People have visited the toolkit website since its launch in 2016

94%

of toolkit training participants that ranked the day a 4 or 5 out of 5

20

Number of counties expressing interest in the toolkit training

180

Number of NC community leaders that have participated in the toolkit training

What participants are saying about the local financing training:

"This training was innovative."

"It is very valuable for various counties to meet and share."

"This was a well-crafted training that provided concrete tools to help us move our planning process forward."

"The workshop did a great job of thoroughly researching and explaining the legal/policy framework in NC regarding funding options."

Invest in a Shared Vision

Make your donation online at www.buildthefoundation.org/invest.

We happily accept checks as well.

Checks can be mailed to:
NC Early Childhood Foundation
514 Daniels St. #173
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Act!

- ✓ Stay up-to-date on early learning issues. Subscribe to the NC Early Learning Foundation's e-newsletter.
- ✓ Be a voice for young children.
- ✓ Mobilize your community.
- ✓ Participate in the NC Pathways to Grade-Level Reading Initiative.