

All children in Asheville and Buncombe County deserve a high-quality preschool experience.



High-quality preschool benefits everyone.

- **Children** who attend preschool become more successful in their education and throughout adulthood. High-quality preschool plays a key role in closing the achievement gap and addressing developmental delays that may otherwise require special education. Children who attend high-quality preschool are more likely to graduate from high school, earn a college degree, get a high-paying job, and avoid conflicts with the justice system.
- **Parents and families** can go to work knowing their children are well cared for, are building social skills, and have the attention of a trained adult who can identify and address early developmental concerns and enhance parenting skills.
- **Communities** that invest in high-quality preschool programs save as much as \$7 for every \$1 they spend, because they reduce high school dropout rates, special/remedial education costs, discipline issues, medical costs, as well as costs for law enforcement, courts, and incarceration.
- **Local economies** benefit from a workforce that is well educated, stable and productive. Thriving, safe and vibrant communities attract top talent and consumers.

Overcoming challenges is a priority.

High-quality preschool in our community is a growing priority. Many families want preschool programs, yet only a fraction of our preschoolers are currently being served. Why?

- High-quality preschool can be expensive for providers and families.
- Preschool openings are limited.
- Preschool teachers' wages are low and the profession is undervalued, resulting in a shortage of teachers.

Fortunately, momentum is growing in Asheville and Buncombe County, with five new preschool classrooms being added to local schools and child care centers between 2015 and 2017. There are many existing assets we can build on for preschool expansion. If we can build on our successes and give preschool providers incentives to grow, we can expand access for all.

Quality matters in preschool.

Preschool is not glorified babysitting. High quality is critical for preschool to pay off for kids, families and community. High-quality preschools are built on teacher-child relationships, provide children with support and tools to deal with trauma and become resilient, use proven methods, collaborate with others, and focus on developing the whole child. We've identified quality standards for preschool that are tailored to real life in the City of Asheville and Buncombe County. The quality standards equip preschool providers with a clear path to improve quality by focusing on classroom environments, teacher knowledge and training, proven curriculum, attendance, family engagement and more. In addition, our recommendations include a focus on the workforce to elevate the importance of preschool teachers, improve working conditions, and broaden career prospects. (Learn more about recommended quality standards at ABPPC.org.)

The benefits of high-quality preschool are greater than the costs. The challenge is to secure preschool benefits for our children, families, community and economy in the City of Asheville and Buncombe County.

How much will preschool expansion cost?

How much it costs will depend on what families require. Some will want full-day, year-round programs. Others may only want preschool during the school day or the school year. Some parents will want to find preschool centers, and others will prefer a family child care home setting. We explored several options of cost, using a benchmark of 70% of all eligible 4-year-olds (and some 5-year-olds), and 64% of all eligible 3-year-olds. Here's what we found:

We estimate the **average annual per child cost** of expanding high-quality preschool to be the following:

FULL DAY, FULL YEAR	SCHOOL DAY, FULL YEAR
\$9,697 - \$10,774	\$6,711 - \$7,470
SCHOOL DAY, SCHOOL YEAR	FAMILY CHILD CARE HOME
\$5,650 - \$6,296	\$6,296 - \$6,384

This translates into an **average annual per classroom cost** that ranges from \$193,932 for a top-quality, full-day, full-year program at a child care center to \$31,480 for a quality family child care home.

Overall, **we estimate the maximum annual cost of providing high-quality preschool for 70% of 4- and 5-year-olds and 64% of 3-year-olds not currently enrolled in preschool (1,778 children) to be \$19,159,022 per year.**

That's less expensive than North Carolina's NC Pre-K program, but more than programs with lower quality standards. It also is a better value than some programs that offer only school-year or part-day options.

Expanding preschool also will require adding additional classrooms across the county. **We estimate the start-up cost of each new preschool classroom to be approximately \$24,000.**



How do we invest in preschool?

When some people talk about “universal pre-K,” they refer to a system in which all preschool seats are funded by the government, like our K-12 school system. We believe that expanding high-quality preschool, right here, right now, will require a mix of both public and private providers — and public and private funding. Public sources can include federal, state and local funds. Private sources can include support from the business community, philanthropy, and from fees-for-service paid by families on a sliding scale. As the work of ABPPC moves forward, we will seek to identify the most likely sources of funding and strategies for seeking funds.

We've got more work to do - for kids!

As the work of ABPPC moves into the next phase, we have many questions still left to answer. **We're taking the conversation out to a broad swath of our community — from key influencers to end-users — to gather perspectives, thoughts, concerns and hopes.** This phase of our work will take many months to accomplish, but it is the best way to make sure our community can fully invest in expanding access to high-quality preschool. Look for more information about our community conversations and join in at ABPPC.org.

Asheville Buncombe Preschool Planning Collaborative

Our vision: to ensure that every child age birth to five in Asheville and Buncombe County has access to high-quality, affordable early care and education.

Our current purpose: to increase access to affordable, high-quality preschool for 3- and 4-year-olds in Asheville and Buncombe County, with a priority on children and families who are currently experiencing the greatest barriers to access.

Learn more at ABPPC.org