



COVID-response: May 2021 Program Updates

Reach Out and Read

Buncombe Partnership for Children
Anya Robyak, Program Coordinator

Our two Reach Out and Read sites continue in May to support and serve their respective communities. They collected the family surveys throughout the month to maintain current data on the effectiveness of the program and the ways in which the practices are operating to fidelity. I delivered books to French Broad Pediatrics once in May, as they continue to see an expansion of their practice, particularly in terms of infants and toddlers.

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

Literacy Together
Laura Bernhein, Outreach and Communications Director

- As of June 10th, there were 4,332 families registered for books through DPIL.
- We have a new collaboration with the YMCA to promote DPIL through their mobile food markets. They are going to register folks onsite/online using an iPad and a hotspot for the internet connection. We are loaning them a Dolly Parton cutout and a few books to have as a display to draw people in.

Kaleidoscope Play & Learn Groups

Asheville City Schools
Marna Holland, Program Coordinator

Kaleidoscope Play and Learn groups in Buncombe County were cancelled starting Monday, March 16, 2020, as a result of statewide public health mandates. On Tuesday, March 17, the coordinators sent initial emails with links to home-based activities for children and parents/caregivers that are developmentally and age appropriate, hands-on and emphasize learning through play. Response from parents and caregivers was immediate and enthusiastic. Both coordinators continued to send families 2-3 emails each week with activities that support the domains of child development. Indoor and outdoor and pre-literacy activities are included in every correspondence, and the coordinators sift through many activities online.

184 children and 171 parents/caregivers are enrolled and participating as of the end of June, 2021, in our online and person-to-person programs (which resumed 4/12 with 8 classes serving 33 families being offered weekly: 4 infant/toddler & 4 preschool at Asheville Primary School/Preschool and also including the Poder Emma virtual group). The activity bags for online participants contain learning materials correspond to the online activity ideas and we have produced several slideshows with photos of the children engaging in the activities

Poder Emma KPL has started their virtual group and will be visiting the face-to-face groups in English as soon as capacity limits are increased for classrooms. The group leaders meet monthly with the Infant and Toddler KPL coordinator for guidance and she is currently supporting them in beginning to collect data.

At the end of May, we found out our school would not be closed and we could not be moving, which ended a year of uncertainty for our future location. As June ends, we are finishing class, getting ready to register for the July/summer classes, completing year-end paperwork, and working around repairs and cleaning of our classrooms.

Two quotes from parents: “Thanks so much for getting us back in the class room with you & other little ones! We have missed you!! Both girls talked about it all day Wednesday and Thursday! Looking forward to more class time-Hanna, Swannanoa, & “Thank you so much for all your hard work during the pandemic. Our sweet babies have missed out on so much socialization and community exposure this past year. It has been so wonderful to get activities to keep us thinking about how to expose our little ones to different ideas and concepts, even if we couldn't get out and experience it all this year.” - Nicole, Asheville

Circle of Security

Buncombe Partnership for Children

Cathy Finn, Early Childhood Program Consultant

A Circle of Security group ran through the month of May and will be ending in early June. A new group is scheduled to start July 1 with three parents as well as a community partner. We continue to share information about COSP groups in a variety of ways, most recently focusing on collaborating with the Sunshine program so they can share the group with parents. We are still trying to recruit enough Spanish speaking caregivers to form a second group.

Asheville Adventure Play

Buncombe Partnership for Children

Caroline Rodier, Assistant Director

In May, we resumed planning efforts with our core volunteers. We discussed the possibility of hosting one pop-up event this fall as well as a training event for teachers and parents. The group plans to tour Rabbit Rabbit in June as the potential site for the fall pop-up.

NC Pre-Kindergarten

Buncombe Partnership for Children

Stacey Bailey, Program Director

The NC Pre-K school year ended with local enrollment averaging 67% of the 435 funded slots. (The state average enrollment was 70% for the year.) Only two classrooms locally (4.5%) operated as fully remote for the year. (Statewide, 11% of NC Pre-K classrooms operated in a fully remote capacity.) Child outcome data is now being collected and will be shared with the local NC Pre-K Advisory Committee this summer.

DCDEE recently announced plans to use federal funding from the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act to offer summer learning for NC Pre-K children. While programmatic details are still being worked out by DCDEE, several providers have expressed interest in participating in this program. Approximately 72 children have been identified locally as possible participants in this specially funded opportunity.

Child Care Subsidies

Buncombe County Health & Human Services/Southwestern Child Development Commission

State-level contract, no monthly report requested

Child Care Resources

Buncombe Partnership for Children

Jenny Vial, CCR Director

No report received

Workforce Development Program

Buncombe Partnership for Children

Tasha Lewis, WDP Director

WDP continues with the online training series for the last cohort for the fiscal year. The WDP team is wrapping up any loose ends, such as updating the WDP participant data base, completing participant background checks, TB screenings and creating DCDEE files for participants that will be ready to work in centers this spring and summer. We have been working very hard to give support to the participants that are enrolled in EDU 119. The participants finished their EDU 119 course the end of April. The WDP team is assisting the graduates of EDU 119 apply for their

Early Childhood Credential. We are very confident that we will reach our goal number of participants by the end of the fiscal year even with the barriers of COVID-19.

We continue to support participants from previous cohorts in their work as substitutes and Early Childhood Educators. One participant is still involved with the translation service to evaluate and translate her Early Educator degree from Venezuela so that DCDEE will recognize her Bachelor's degree. Another participant is now ready to apply for her Early Childhood Credential. A participant needed financial assistance with car problems and was directed to apply for the finish line grant through BRCC to help with repairs. There continues to be a great need for more Early Childhood Educators in Buncombe and the surrounding counties.

WAGES

Child Care Services Association

State-level contract, no monthly report requested

Sustaining Facility Quality

Buncombe Partnership for Children

Caroline Rodier, Assistant Director

Carey Price, Finance and Contracts Director

The second of two grant payments for the fiscal year were completed in May along with all back-up documentation for one-time professional development and Living Wage bonuses. Monitoring documentation was prepared and sent to Al Smith, our contracted monitor for in-house programs.

Child Care Health Consultation

Mountain Area Health Education Center (MAHEC)

Chrissy Wolfe, Program Coordinator/CCHC

For the month of MAY 2021, the Child Care Health Consultation program has continued to promote healthy and safe environments for children and staff in our child care settings.

As child care staff have questions about health, COVID screening, exclusion, and safety they are directed to contact their county's CCHC. The contact information is available on the NC DHHS website for the two CCHCs serving Buncombe County. The CCHC program has consistently been available to all child care facilities and family child care homes in Buncombe County providing coaching and guidance following the Child Care Strong NC Public Health ToolKit: Interim Guidance.

The CCHC focus has not changed despite operational changes resulting from COVID-19. As the CCHC program continues to respond to the Coronavirus pandemic, based on guidance provided by the UNC Child Care Health & Safety Resource Center, NC DHHS, DCDEE, and CDC, the program will continue to provide information and resources to assist child care facilities in keeping children and staff safe during this time.

In order to mitigate the spread of the virus, CCHC services are being offered through:

- Emails, Texts, Phone Calls
 - Zoom, Webex,
 - Virtual Real-Time Trainings
 - Outdoor physical distancing
 - Limited participation, face coverings and social distancing
 - On-site visits to child care facilities. CCHCs are continuing to follow COVID precautions.
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- For the month of May, Chrissy responded to 18 phone calls and emails from child care facilities for COVID related questions.
 - Chrissy scheduled 2 First Aid & CPR trainings and Bonnie Garner assisted to provide the trainings.
 - Chrissy provided 2 IT'S SIDS training, 1 Stay Healthy Stay Clean training, 1 Emergency Preparedness and Response training, and 1 Allergic Reactions to meet the DCDEE requirements for child care staff.
 - Bonnie & Robin provided 1 Medication Administration with hands-on skills check.
 - Chrissy, Bonnie & Robin have assisted a total of 6 facilities with contagious illness (other than COVID related).
 - Chrissy provided coaching to 2 child care facilities for sanitation issues.
 - Robin Worley is enrolled into the CCHC training course through the NC Health & Safety Resource Center. Bonnie has continued to introduce Robin with on-site consultations to child care facilities to review medical action plans for children with special health care needs.

Buncombe County early childhood educators continue to prove to be resilient and flexible in adapting to these changing circumstances. They continue to provide excellent care of children in our community, and the CCHC program is proud to continue providing technical assistance, coaching, training and support to these early educators and child care facilities.

The SUNSHINE Project

FIRST Parent Center

Davina Weirich, Program Manager

- attended weekly Sunshine staff meetings and team discussions/check-ins, reflective feedback regarding referrals
- in person classroom observations, creating materials, dropping off materials to programs
- phone calls, emails, virtual/ in person visits with parents and teachers- case management
- dev. screenings, checklists, TPOT review, and goal summaries
- team consulting/case management with additional therapists and agencies that serve children on caseload
- prepared and conducted our 6th behavior cohort - follow up emails to all attendees regarding meeting notes and requested resources
- outreach and collaboration with CDSA and BCPC
- researching/gathering information/resources for Sunshine Project newsletter
- collaborated, discussed, and reflected with Jenny in regards to our TA programs
- completed the Reconnect for Resiliency Champions Training
- attended monthly Autism Collaborative Meeting
- attended NCAEYC monthly equity circle
- attended monthly NC Pre-K board meeting
- monthly equity discussion with our team- strategic planning
- community outreach and discussion of our program- spoke with 4 new centers that we have not consulted in yet
- data collection and quarterly paperwork
- received surveys from teachers, families, and directors to get constructive feedback in order to improve our skills/programming
- REI/BB keep it moving coalition monthly meeting
- attended webinar on TS Gold
- attended webinar on inclusive classroom practices in EC programming
- attended webinar on effective communication strategies in EC
- attended an informational session on a Morgan Stanley funding opportunity Mental Health Alliance Innovation Competition for non-profits
- viewed the documentary “Tomorrow’s Hope” (amazing....) and reflected with colleagues

Shaping Buncombe

Buncombe Partnership for Children

Natasha Bowden, Shape Specialist

No report received

Healthy Communities - Breastfeeding Friendly, Buncombe County Health & Human Services grant

Buncombe Partnership for Children

Natasha Bowden, Shape Specialist

No report received

Healthy Starts, North Carolina Partnership for Children Infant-Toddler Consulting grant
Buncombe Partnership for Children
Natasha Bowden, Shape Specialist

No report received

Early Childhood Systems Coordination
Buncombe Partnership for Children
Deanna LaMotte, Early Childhood Systems Coordinator

Single Portal / Coordinated Enrollment: The Coordinated Enrollment group met twice this month to collectively review NC Pre-K applications for children with IEPs AND applications that were complicated or required cross-program communications for any reason (e.g., families aren't eligible for their first choice, or they have special needs like transportation but chose sites that do not offer, etc..) I have continued to support this group with technology and workflow as well, building a spreadsheet to "house" student data and basic placement notes. We also had a demo with SchoolMint, a potential common application platform that seems to solve a lot of the challenges we've had this year, and am working with them on pricing and timelines to move forward.

Biz Leadership & Automation: This project wrapped up our meetings this month. I have collected extensive pre- and post- data, but haven't fully analyzed it yet. Both participants were positive about what they got out of the project, what they've learned about automation and communicating with families and ways to think about program evaluation, and also grateful that we were able to shift/simplify it a bit due to the overwhelm of COVID-19.

ABPPC: ABPPC's two active workgroups (data & mapping, and Compensation/Salary scale) both met in May, as did the full collaborative. I am still trying to communicate with Rachael at the county and with members and BPFC staff to clarify what work we can dig into (and not have to wait for the County to lead or make a specific request, etc.).

Data collection: Much of my May was devoted to arranging, conducting, and following up from family and Kindergarten teacher focus groups. I conducted 6 family focus groups (from 2-8 participants each) and 1 focus group of 9 kindergarten teachers. One (possibly two) more will happen next week, specifically with Spanish-speaking families. I also collected 53 responses to the "ECE Systems Survey" focused on supply/demand, PD, and shared services. I will be analyzing all of this data in June.