

Community of Practice: Building Pre-K 2022-2023 School Year



Numerous communities in North Carolina have made it a priority to increase access to public preschool for 3- and 4-year-olds. Given the investments being made locally by counties such as Buncombe, Durham, Forsyth, Mecklenburg and Wake and the number of counties actively building capacity toward such an expansion (Chatham, Guilford and New Hanover), a group of colleagues from Durham and Buncombe convened an initial interest meeting for a preschool community of practice. The idea was met with strong support and grew into a broader initiative.

Current members of the group include representatives from Buncombe, Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Durham, Forsyth, New Hanover and Wake counties.

We believe that through transparency, sharing, brainstorming and, at times, commiseration, we can help each other implement best practices and avoid pitfalls.

The group convened and set a meeting for every other month modeled on a community of practice format—adaptive and member led—to bring items to the table for reflection, review and problem solving. Some of the questions that have been posed to more established programs by nascent initiatives come from work completed by staff at MDC for a series of interviews.¹ They are:

1. What is the infrastructure needed to support and administer a mixed delivery local pre-k initiative? What does it take to staff this? What are the administrative costs?
2. What resources, abilities and staffing are needed to effectively blend multiple sources of funding? To administer and coordinate programmatic components across the system?
3. What are the characteristics of strong governance structures? How has governance been delineated from administration?
4. What are lessons learned from building out the necessary infrastructure?

Meetings are held virtually at this time with long-term plans to identify resources to convene in person and to hold formal professional development sessions on leading issues. The members intend to create sessions to invite teams of stakeholders from their communities to participate in learning events once or twice per year.

CONTACT

Dr. Linda Chappel, Sr. Vice President,
Triangle Area Child Care Resource and Referral Services
lindac@childcareservices.org

Tammorah Mathis, Director of Durham PreK
tammorahm@childcareservices.org

1201 S. Briggs Avenue, Suite 200
Durham, NC 27703
Phone: (919) 403-6950
www.childcareservices.org
www.durhamprek.org



¹ Questions authored by staff at MDC for a series of interviews. <https://www.mdcinc.org/>