

JOINT LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

NC Department of Health and Human Services

NC Pre-Kindergarten

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Secretary for Opportunity and
Well-Being**

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What is NC Pre-K and Who is Eligible?

- **High-quality education for 4-year-olds to enhance school success**
- **Delivered in public schools, private child care centers and Head Start**
- **To be eligible, child must turn four by August 31st and meet one of these criteria:**
 - A family income of 75% or less SMI (\$60,554 for a family of 4)
 - Based on current funding, 39% of children must meet TANF eligibility (\$25,750 for a family of 4)
 - Parent(s) in active military status
 - Limited English proficiency
 - Developmental delay or identified disability
 - Chronic health condition

What Makes NC Pre-K High Quality?



Highly Qualified Teachers

- BA/BS and Birth – Kindergarten Teaching License
- Specialized training in literacy
- Supported with mentors



Enriched Learning Environments

- 4 or 5 star center
- Approved Curriculum
- Minimum 6.5 hours per day
- 1 teacher for every 9 children
- 18 children in class



Enhanced Supports for Children and Families

- Developmental Screenings
- Child Assessment
- Family Engagement

How Do We Know NC Pre-K Works?

Decades of research show that children who attend NC Pre-K when compared to their peers have:

- Higher literacy, math, and social-emotional skills at kindergarten entry
- Higher end of third grade reading and math test scores
- Sustained academic gains throughout the end middle school
- Lower rates of special education placement
- Lower grade repetition through the end of elementary school

Impact of North Carolina's Early Childhood Initiatives on Special Education Placements in Third Grade, Clara G Muschkin, Helen F. Ladd and Kenneth A. Dodge, Education Evaluation and Policy Analysis, February 2015.

<http://epa.sagepub.com/content/early/2014/12/04/0162373714559096.full.pdf+html?ijkey=rro4HwVYfleHc&keytype=ref&siteid=spepa>

How Much Does NC Pre-K Cost Per Child and Who Pays?

- In 2017, NC State conducted the study directed by the General Assembly and determined cost per child was \$9,972 when considering:
 - Actual Wages/Benefits of staff
 - Group size of 18 four-year-olds in a class with two teachers
 - Curriculum, assessment, program materials
 - Costs to administer the program

North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. (2017). Study Costs and Effectiveness Associated with NC Pre-K Slots: Report to the House Appropriations Committee on Health and Human Services and Senate Appropriations Committee on Health and Human Services and Fiscal Research Division. Retrieved from: <https://buildthefoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Costs-Associated-with-NC-PreK-Study.pdf>

How Much Does NC Pre-K Cost Per Child and Who Pays?

- State pays on average \$5,228 (52% of 2017 cost)
- Counties, LEAs, and in-kind contributions from participating programs make up the difference

Who Decides How Funds and Slots are Allocated for NC Pre-K?

General Assembly

Appropriates funding and funding sources for NC Pre-K program

**May or may not also specify number of children to be served*



NCDHHS

Establishes base rates based on funding and direction provided by General Assembly



Local NC Pre-K Contracting Agencies

Request number of slots to NCDHHS annually

**May choose to use local funds to increase rates and/or fund additional slots*



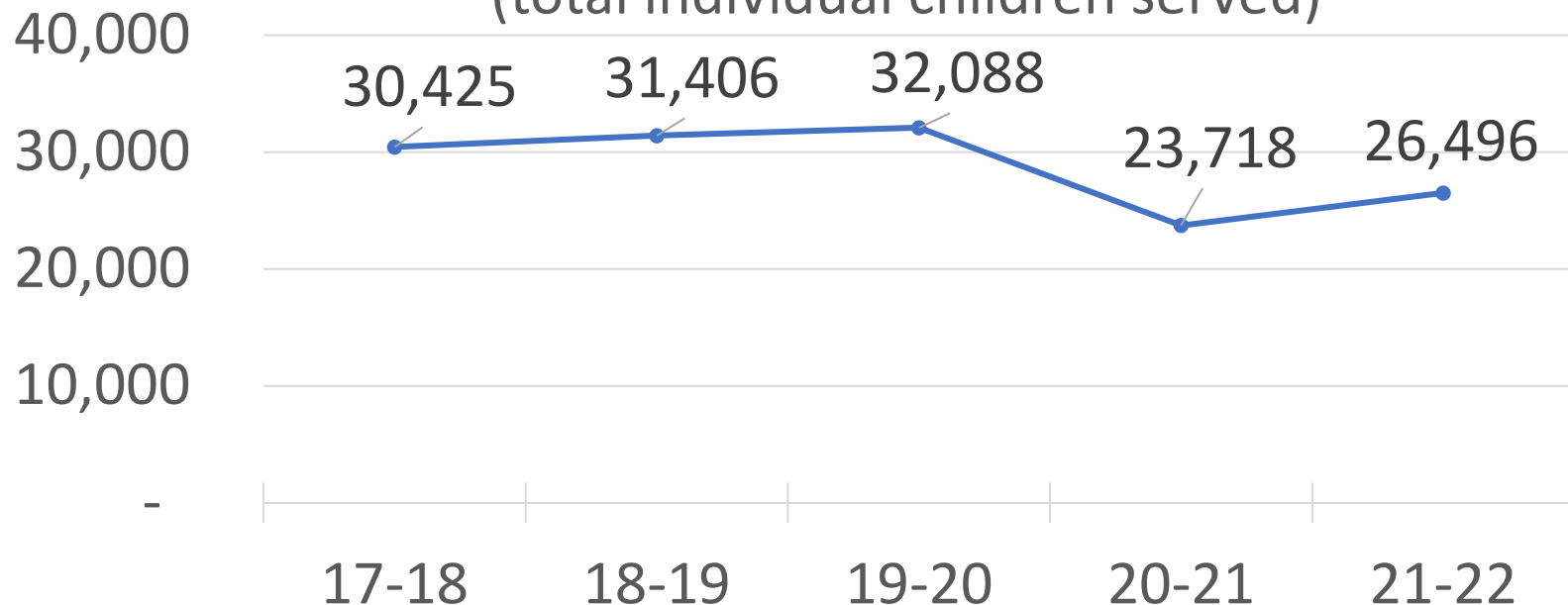
NCDHHS

Awards slots to local contracting agencies based on slots requested and total available funds

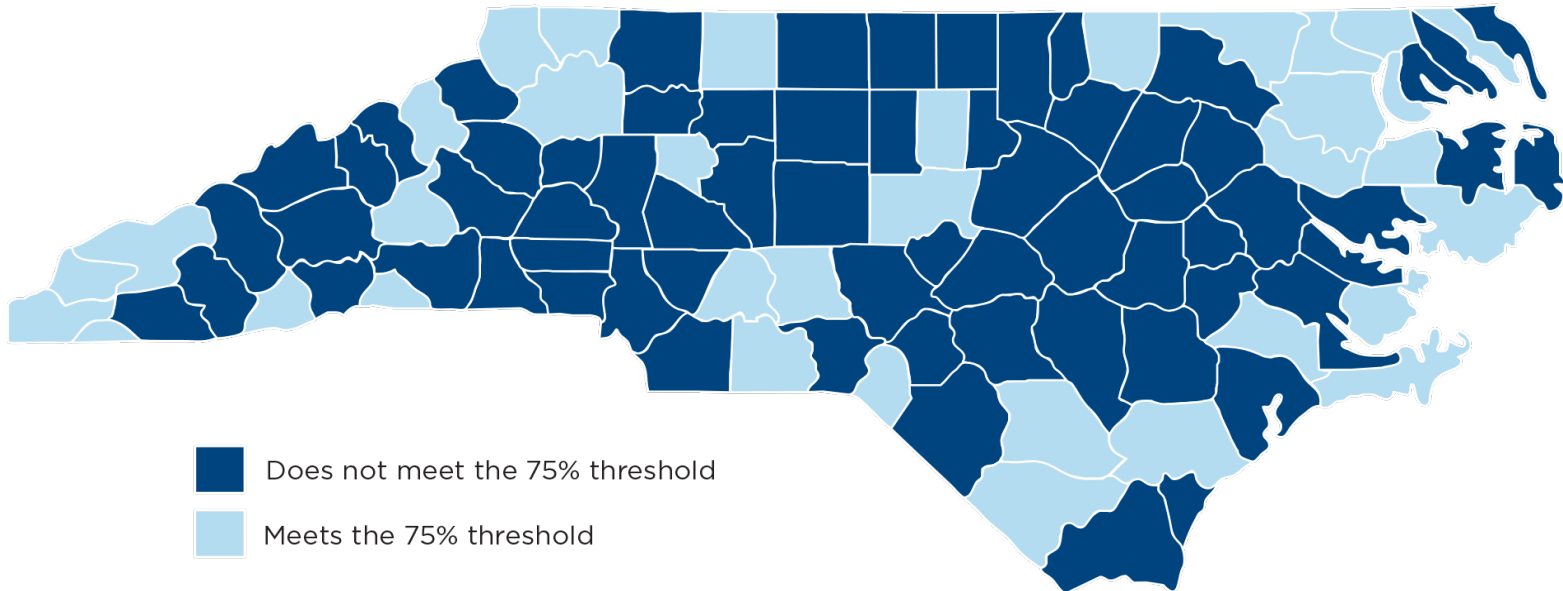
How Many Children Are Served through NC Pre-K?

NC Pre-K Enrollment 2018-2022

Cumulative Enrollment
(total individual children served)



Counties Serving At Least 75% of Eligible Children through NC Pre-K (2019-2020)

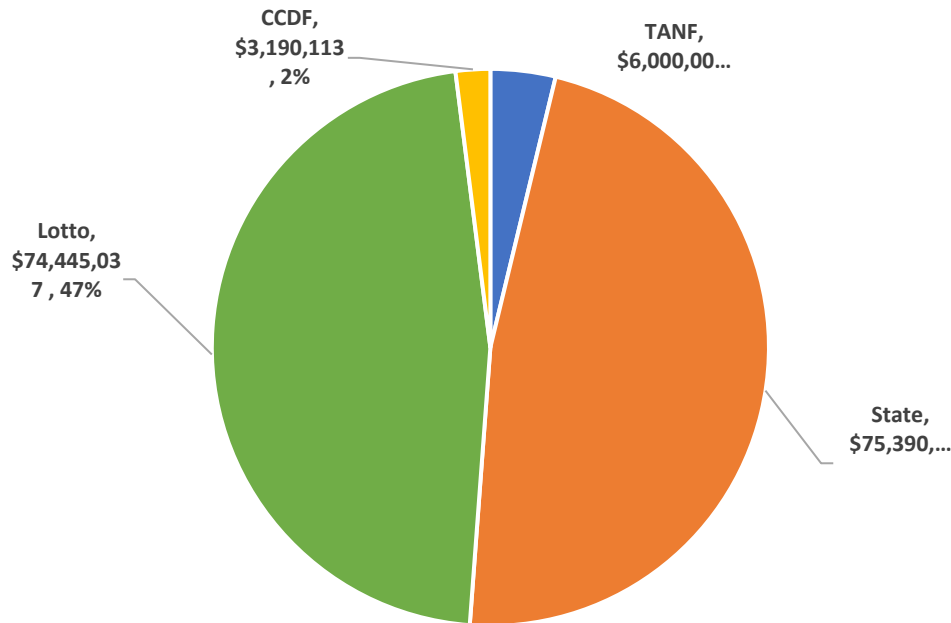


Counties Not Serving 75% of Eligible Children & Not Requesting More Slots

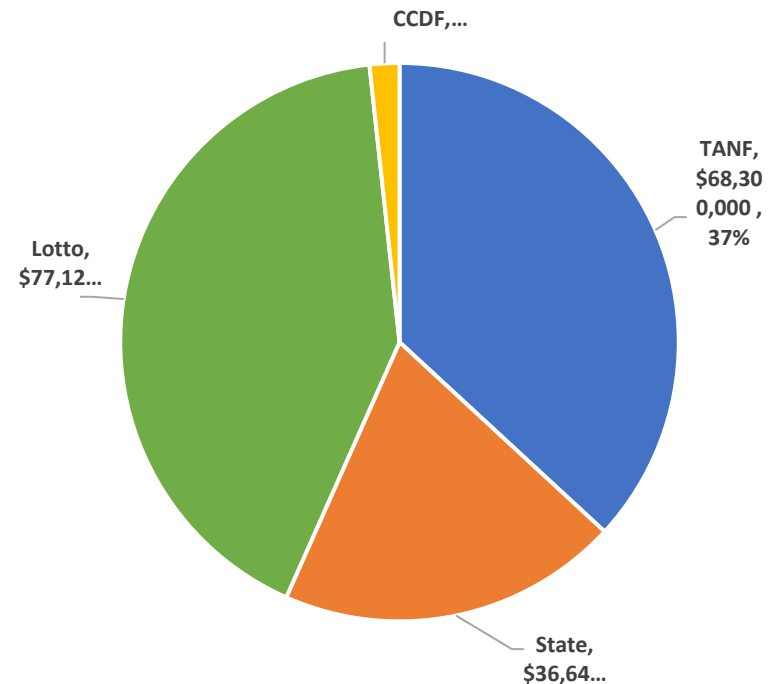
- **School Year 2017 – 2018**
 - Alexander, Beaufort, Brunswick, Cabarrus, Camden, Cumberland, Davidson, Gates, Greene, Lenoir, Mitchell, Nash, Onslow, Perquimans, Person, Rutherford, Sampson, Surry, Union
- **School Year 2018 – 2019**
 - Alexander, Brunswick, Cabarrus, Caswell, Cumberland, Currituck, Gates, Henderson, Madison, Mitchell, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Rowan, Union
- **School Year 2019 – 2020**
 - Alexander, Beaufort, Cumberland, Currituck, Edgecombe, Franklin, Granville, Greene, Halifax, Hoke, Lenoir, Madison, Mitchell, Nash, Onslow, Perquimans, Person, Richmond, Robeson, Rowan, Tyrrell, Wake, Watauga, Wilson, Yadkin

NC Pre-K Funding and Sources

SFY 17-18 by Fund Source: \$159.0M



SFY 20-21 by Fund Source: \$185.2M



Barriers to Access and Expansion

- **Insufficient funding to cover actual costs per slot and expand program**
- **Limited funds to recruit, prepare and retain qualified teachers**
- **Limited funds to recruit eligible families**
- **Lack of parity and resources between public schools and private centers**
- **Limited local funds to offset insufficient state funding**

Recommendations

- **Continue to increase state funding to address rates**
- **Fund teacher pipeline and family recruitment efforts**
- **Explore alternative per-classroom funding formula**
- **Continue use of targeted professional development trainings and teacher assessment tools to enhance teacher skills and improve children's school access**