

Executive Director

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Beginnings®

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**BEGINNINGS For Parents of Children Who Are Deaf
or Hard of Hearing, Inc
FY 2023 Annual Report to the Joint Legislative Education
Oversight Committee**

**Beginnings for Parents of Children Who are Deaf or Hard
of Hearing, Inc**

Provides additional funding as a pass-through grant to Beginnings for Parents of Children Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, Inc., a nonprofit that helps parents and families understand hearing loss and the diverse needs of children who are deaf or hard of hearing. The revised net appropriation for this purpose is \$1.5 million in each year of the biennium.

SECTION 7.28.(b) No later than December 31, 2023, Beginnings for Parents of Children Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, Inc., shall report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee at least the following information from the prior fiscal year:

- (1) A detailed accounting of how State funds were spent by the program.
- (2) An accounting of any other funding received from other sources.
- (3) Any planned expenditures or future uses of received funds not reflected in the accounting required by subdivision (1) of this subsection.
- (4) The number of students served by the program, including generalized data on the age, grade level, and location of students served.
- (5) A description of how the program evaluates the effectiveness of the program or student success.
- (6) Outcomes achieved by the program.
- (7) Any other information the program deems relevant for the Committee to know.

Date Due: December 31, 2023



Mission Statement

The Mission of BEGINNINGS is to provide emotional, informational, and technical support to parents of children who are deaf or hard of hearing, deaf parents with hearing children and professionals serving those families. BEGINNINGS assists parents of children from birth through age 21 by providing information and support that will empower them as informed decision makers, helping them access the services they need for their child, and promoting early identification of hearing loss and awareness of early intervention programs. BEGINNINGS believes that given accurate, objective information about hearing loss, parents can make sound decisions for their child about educational placement, communication methodology and related service needs.

Board of Directors

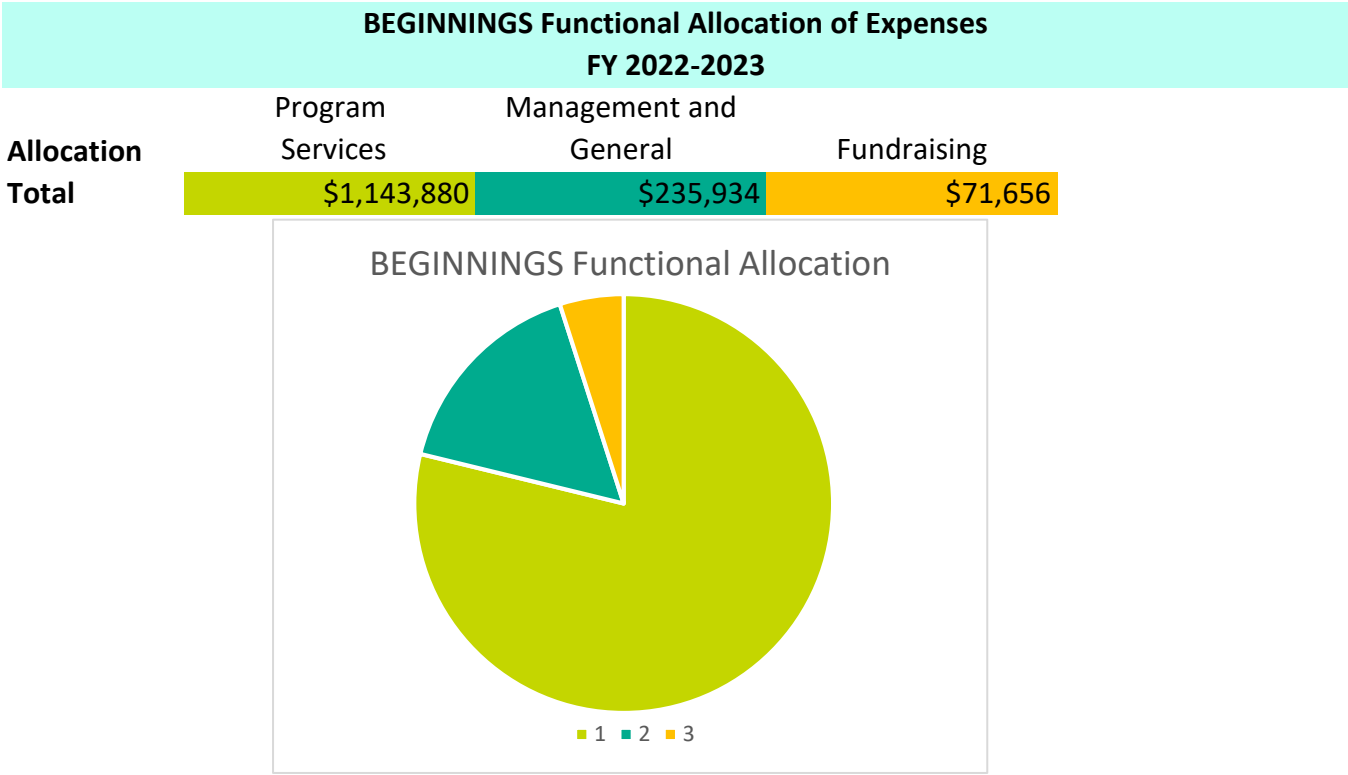
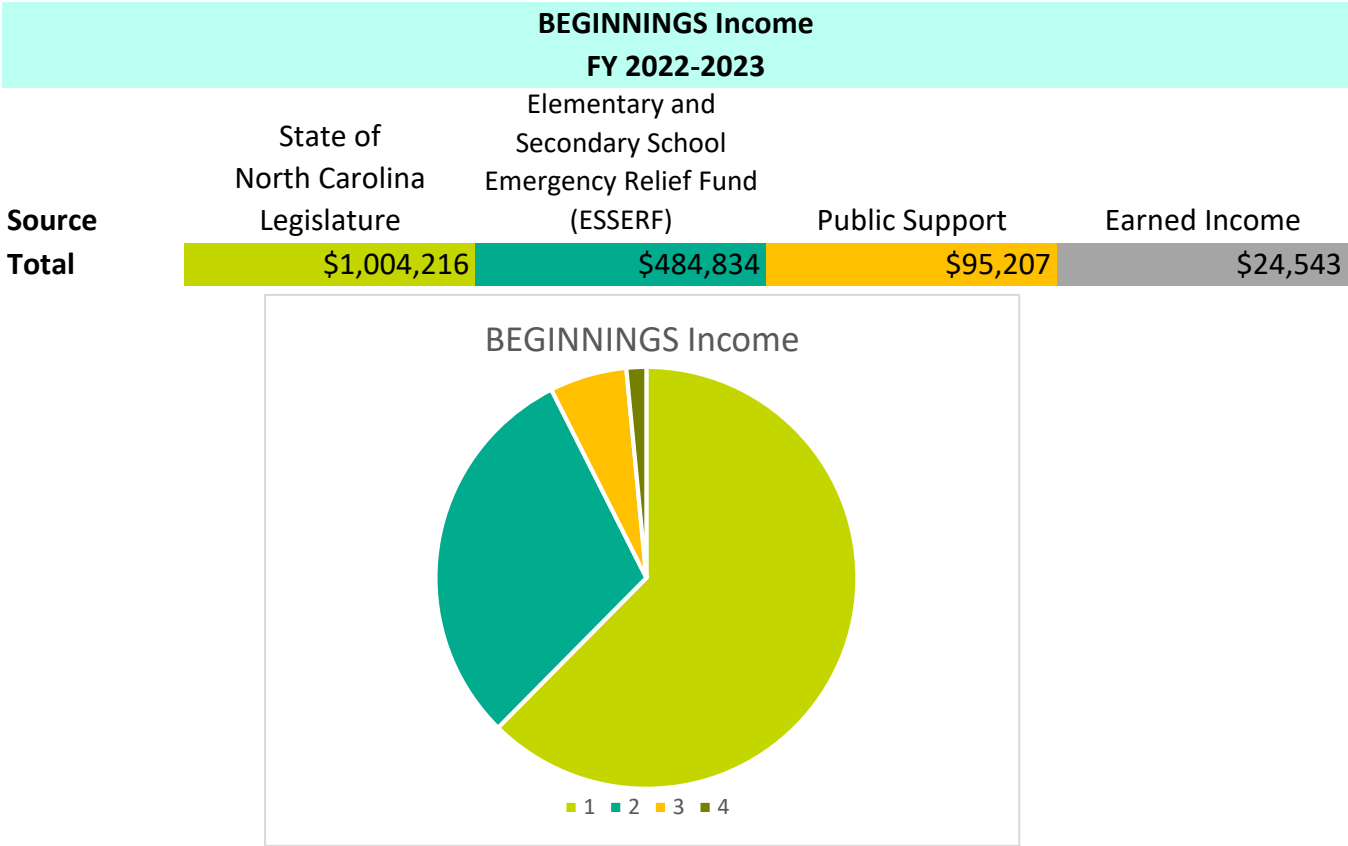
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Background:

NC State legislature awarded BEGINNINGS For Parents of Children Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, Inc (BEGINNINGS) a pass-through grant for \$1,004,216 recurring in Senate Bill 105, Appropriations. Additionally, BEGINNINGS was awarded \$1,000,000 from the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund, to be spent by September 2024. Initially up to 50% was to be spent prior to July 1, 2022, but NC DPI didn't fully execute the grant until July 7, 2022.

The purpose of the grant is for BEGININGS to provide information and support to parents of children birth through 21 who are deaf or hard of hearing in all 100 NC counties. BEGINNINGS provides these services by meeting with parents in their home or virtually to review audiological reports, communication approaches and educational options. Once a child is enrolled in school, BEGINNINGS assists parents to understand federal law, provides IEP Advocacy and helps parents and students understand the transition to adulthood process. During FY 20223- 2023, BEGINNINGS allocated funding for these services as appropriate to either the state Contract or the ESSERF Grant.

An Independent auditor completes an annual financial audit in compliance with Generally Accepted Government Audit Standards. The audit for FY 2022-2023, completed in October, reports the following income and expenses.



BEGINNINGS serves parents of children who are deaf or hard of hearing from birth through 21.

Parents receive services based on the following phases:

- 0-3 years old, newly identified and receiving early intervention services and transition to preschool;
- 3-5 years old, assisting with referral to preschool services and IDEA advocacy;
- Elementary School, assisting with referral for EC services and IDEA or 504 advocacy;
- Transition to Adulthood, preparing parents and child for post secondary ed, career or guardianship.

Child Details FY 2022-2023					
County	Total Served	0-3 years old	3-5 years old	Elementary School	Transition to Adulthood
Alamance	22	8	4	9	1
Alexander	5	4		1	
Alleghany	1	1			
Anson	4	3	1		
Ashe	5	1	1	3	
Avery	1		1		
Beaufort	8	3	1	3	1
Bertie	1				1
Bladen	3		1	1	1
Brunswick	6	3	1	2	
Buncombe	44	7	10	22	5
Burke	10	4	1	4	1
Cabarrus	39	16	9	8	6
Caldwell	6	1	3	2	
Carteret	7	3	2	2	
Caswell	1			1	
Catawba	8	3	3	2	
Chatham	8	1	3	2	2
Cherokee	1				1
Cleveland	14	4	7	1	2
Columbus	1		1		
Craven	13	8	2	1	2
Cumberland	24	8	6	7	3
Currituck	2	1		1	
Dare	3	2	1		
Davidson	23	5	8	7	3
Davie	3		1	1	1
Duplin	8	3	2	2	1
Durham	77	19	19	32	7

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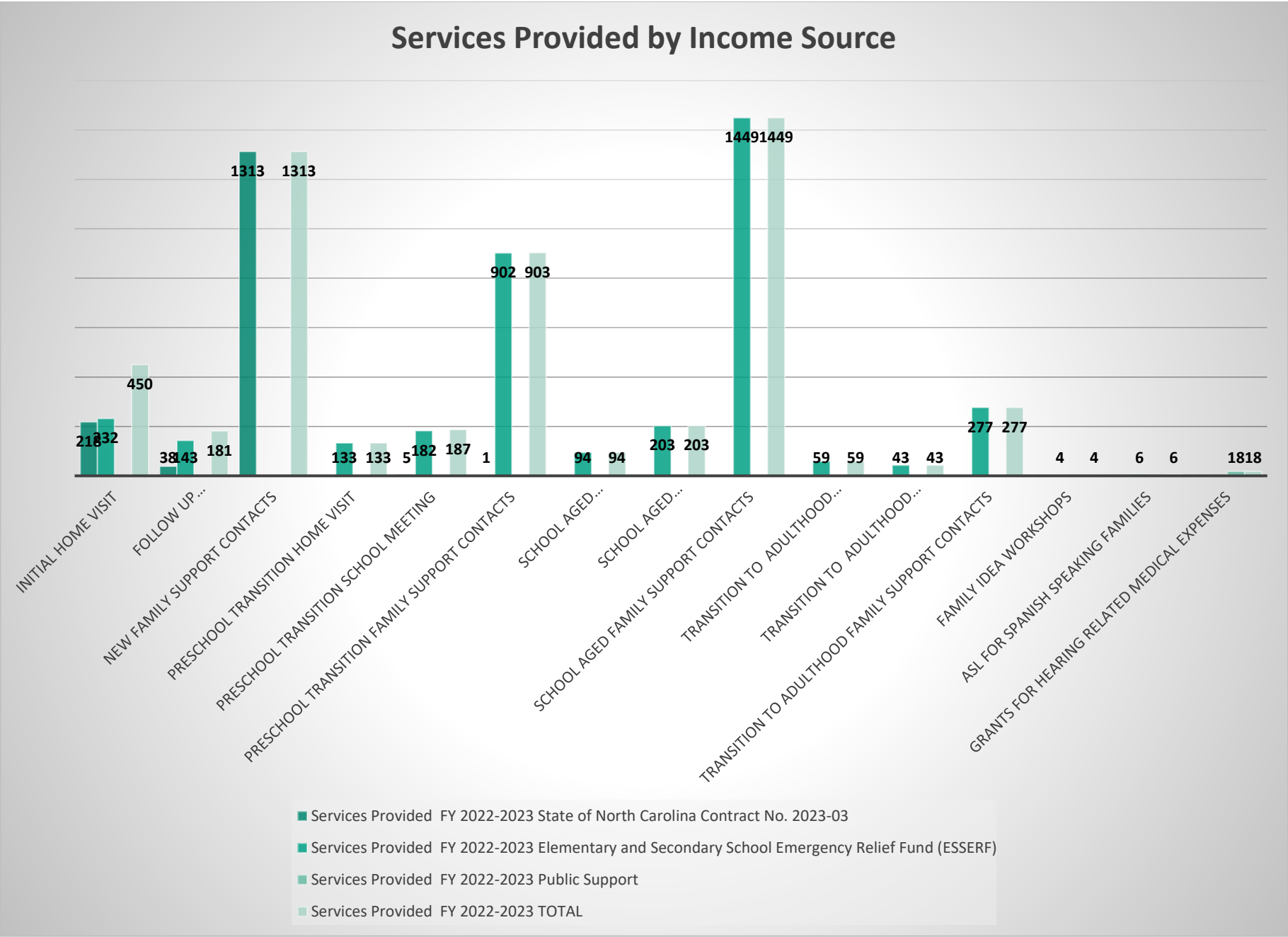
Child Details FY 2022-2023					
County	Total Served	0-3 years old	3-5 years old	Elementary School	Transition to Adulthood
Edgecombe	4	1	2		1
Forsyth	46	10	9	21	6
Franklin	8	3		5	
Gaston	15	2	5	8	
Graham	1			1	
Granville	8	3	2	2	1
Greene	6	2	2	1	1
Guilford	106	20	17	42	27
Halifax	4			4	
Harnett	16	6	4	5	1
Haywood	4	4			
Henderson	15	2	4	7	2
Hertford	1		1		
Hoke	9	3	3	2	1
Hyde	1		1		
Iredell	25	5	12	6	2
Jackson	5	2		3	
Johnston	29	5	11	11	2
Lee	9	2	3	4	
Lenoir	3		3		
Lincoln	4	2	2		
Macon	8	2		4	2
Madison	2			2	
Martin	3		3		
McDowell	7	2	1	3	1
Mecklenburg	162	60	48	43	11
Montgomery	2			1	1
Moore	8	1	2	4	1
Nash	16	2	8	2	4
New Hanover	10	1	3	5	1
Onslow	28	10	4	12	2
Orange	16	1	6	6	3
Pamlico	1			1	
Pasquotank	3		2	1	
Pender	9		2	5	2
Person	6	2		4	
Pitt	17	6	3	6	2
Polk	1		1		

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Child Details FY 2022-2023					
County	Total Served	0-3 years old	3-5 years old	Elementary School	Transition to Adulthood
Randolph	23	4	5	8	6
Richmond	5	2	2	1	
Robeson	18	2	7	8	1
Rockingham	17	3	4	7	3
Rowan	14	8	5	1	
Rutherford	6	2	2	1	1
Sampson	14	5	4	4	1
Scotland	6	1	1	2	2
Stanly	11	3	6	2	
Stokes	1		1		
Surry	4		1	2	1
Swain	6	2		4	
Transylvania	5			4	1
Tyrrell	1	1			
Union	30	5	14	7	4
Vance	10	3	2	2	3
Wake	168	46	47	57	18
Watauga	3		1	2	
Wayne	20	5	8	6	1
Wilkes	5	1	2		2
Wilson	11	2	1	3	5
Yadkin	5	2	1	2	
Yancey	1				1
TOTAL	1350	364	366	458	162

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Services Provided FY 2022-2023				
Service	State of North Carolina Contract No. 2023-03	Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSERF)	Public Support	TOTAL
Initial Home Visit	218	232		450
Follow up				
Home Visit	38	143		181
New Family				
Support Contacts	1313			1313
Transition Home				
Visit		133		133
Preschool				
Transition School				
Meeting	5	182		187
Preschool				
Transition Family				
Support Contacts	1	902		903
School Aged				
Home Visit		94		94
School Aged				
School Meeting		203		203
School Aged Family				
Support Contacts		1449		1449
Transition to				
Adulthood				
Home Visit		59		59
Transition to				
Adulthood				
School Meeting		43		43
Transition to				
Adulthood Family				
Support Contacts		277		277
Family IDEA				
Workshops		4		4
ASL for Spanish				
Speaking Families		6		6
Grants for Hearing				
Related Medical				
Expenses			18	18

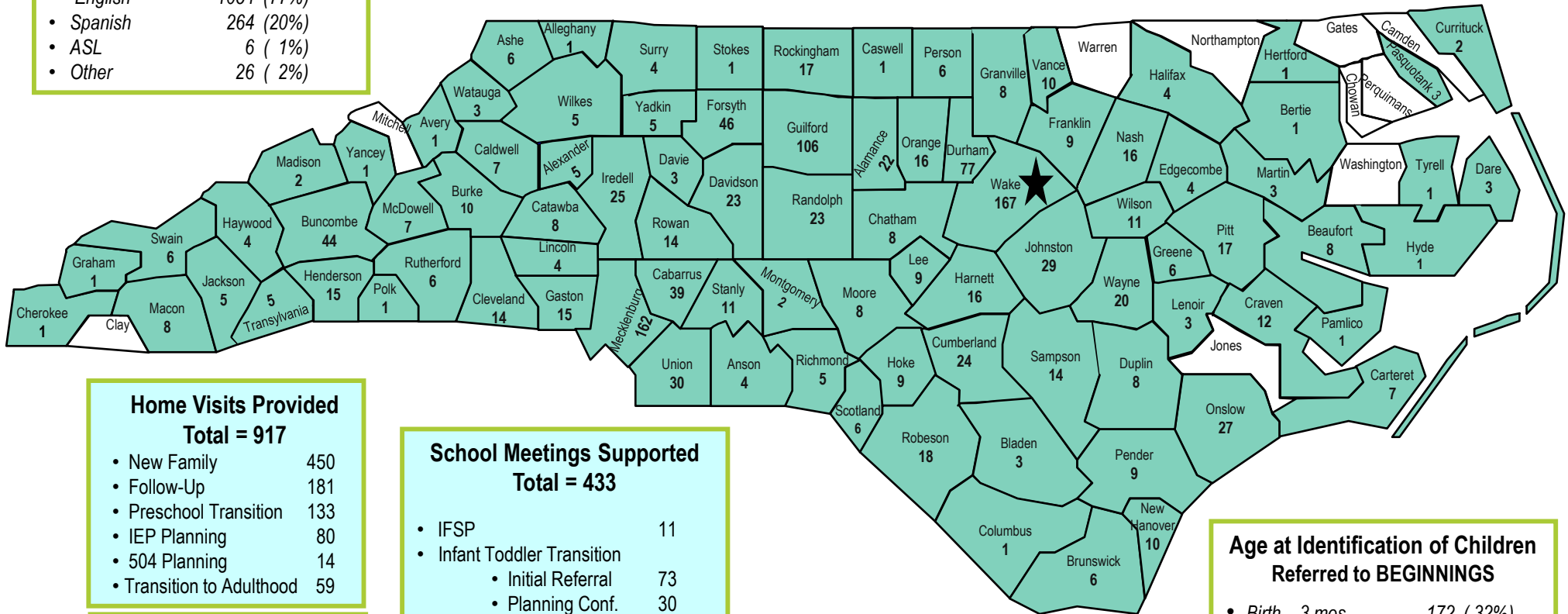


Services Provided to Families in Fiscal Year 2023 (July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023)

New Families = 588 ■ ■ Returning Families = 762 ■ ■ Total Families Served = 1350
90 Counties

Language Spoken in the Home

- English 1054 (77%)
- Spanish 264 (20%)
- ASL 6 (1%)
- Other 26 (2%)



Home Visits Provided

Total = 917

- New Family 450
- Follow-Up 181
- Preschool Transition 133
- IEP Planning 80
- 504 Planning 14
- Transition to Adulthood 59

Other Services

- Advocacy 0
- Exhibits 20
- In-service 4
- Meetings 56
- Observations 0
- Presentation 12
- Staff Development 54

School Meetings Supported

Total = 433

- IFSP 11
- Infant Toddler Transition
 - Initial Referral 73
 - Planning Conf. 30
 - IEP 73
- School Aged
 - Initial Referral 31
 - IEP 147
 - 504 25
- Transition to Adulthood
 - Initial Referral 0
 - IEP 38
 - 504 5

Communication Choice For Newly Served Children

- ASL 8 (2%)
- Cued Speech 0 (0%)
- Spoken Language 441 (93%)
- Simultaneous Communication 25 (5%)
- Other 1 (<1%)

The parents of 61 children had not decided on communication choice at the time of our visit(s).

Age at Identification of Children Referred to BEGINNINGS

- Birth – 3 mos. 172 (32%)
- 4 – 6 mos. 47 (9%)
- 7 – 9 mos. 21 (4%)
- 10 – 12 mos. 19 (3%)
- 13 mos. – 2 yrs. 37 (7%)
- 25 mos. – 3 yrs. 21 (4%)
- 3 – 5 yrs. 94 (17%)
- 6 – 10 yrs. 100 (19%)
- 11 – 21 yrs 25 (5%)

BEGINNINGS IMPACT

BEGINNINGS For Parents of Children Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing has provided information support to families in North Carolina since 1987, with more families served each year (with the exception of FY 2020). During FY 2023, 92 additional families were referred to BEGINNINGS to receive information, support and advocacy over FY 2022. Beyond the increasing numbers, our impact is measured with three critical outcomes.

Referrals

BEGINNINGS receives referrals directly from the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program (EHDI) HearingLink as well as direct referrals from audiologists and parents. There was a 3% increase in referrals directly from audiologists in FY 2023 over FY 2022. Some of the audiologists complete the direct referral to BEGINNINGS at the same time they enter the confirmation of the hearing loss into HearingLink, even though HearingLink includes a referral to BEGINNINGS. The audiologist reports to BEGINNINGS intake team that they want to be certain BEGINNINGS receives timely notification of the child. Audiologists state that when families receive a home visit by a BEGINNINGS parent educator, the family returns to the follow-up appointments with a better understanding of the hearing loss, better compliance with hearing technology and higher enrollment in early intervention services.

IEP Goals and Student Progress

BEGINNINGS parent educators meet with parents prior to IEP or 504 meetings to help them understand and navigate the educational process. By having a better understanding educational law, parents are able to provide more informed significant parental concern statements and the team is able to develop appropriate goals to address those parental concerns. One parent stated that “it is not easy to navigate the legal process. Our parent educator listened to our questions and helped us ask questions of the team to write goals appropriate for our child.” And an educator in Forsythe County remarked, “Having a BEGINNINGS parent educator prepare a parent for an IEP meeting helps the parent be less emotionally responsive so that we can address the needs of the child.” Through this process, BEGINNINGS is helping teams write language goals to close the language gap for children with hearing loss.

Parent Report

BEGINNINGS complete follow up conversations with parents. Below are some of the comments:

“We didn’t know anyone in the Deaf community and understood our options after meeting with our parent educator.”

“BEGINNINGS helped us foster a positive and collaborative relationship with our school team.”

“BEGINNINGS is a light in a very dark time.”

BEGINNINGS FUTURE USE OF FUNDING

Future funding will be used to expand the scope of services provided. First, BEGINNINGS will increase the number of services providers to include both additional English and Spanish speaking parent educators. We will continue to prioritize parents of newly identified children to help them understand their child's hearing loss and collaborate with the Infant-Toddler program to encourage enrollment in the Early Learning Sensory Support Program-HI. We will continue to grow our Transition to Adulthood program assisting parents with the emotional and legal impact of their child transitioning to secondary education, career or guardianship. This program was initiated in FY 2021 to provide support to parents of children receiving Exceptional Children services, accommodations on a 504 plan, or children with no educational plan in place. This program educates parents regarding the transition process for IEP planning, explains the different accommodations for post-secondary education, helps parents and student understand ADA accommodations and provides parents emotional support for those entering the guardianship process. BEGINNINGS will begin the process of creating an initiative to assist parents with their child's entry into Kindergarten and to help them learn to navigate educational law with a positive and collaborative experience. Parents of children receiving preschool services during and following the pandemic have expressed concerns about their children starting kindergarten. Specifically, they are worried about loss of learning during the pandemic and in person vs virtual learning education. Our Kindergarten program will educate parents about the differences between preschool services and kindergarten/school aged services and help them learn to be advocates for their child in the school setting. BEGINNINGS will continue to collaborate with the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) program to try to reduce the number of children that are not completing their diagnostic testing by 3 months and not receiving intervention by 6 months, according to the EHDI goals.