



Updates and Program Support

PARTNERSHIP FOR CHILDREN FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

Mary F. Sonnenberg, M.Ed., President

PARTNERSHIP FOR CHILDREN OF CUMBERLAND COUNTY | CCPFC.ORG

Executive Summary

Partnership for Children opened its doors nearly 30 years ago to support children and families uniquely. The core vision is to ensure that **every** child has the support to enter kindergarten healthy and ready to succeed. The original intent of Smart Start was to provide 25% of the local need, with the community and local support providing the balance of funds to meet needs. Currently, Cumberland County is meeting an estimated 18% of the need with available funding. We do this by providing programs and supports that **advance children's well-being, empower families, and strengthen our early care and education system.**

In the mid-1990s, the Partnership for Children of Cumberland County purchased the building at 351 Wagoner Drive and opened the Partnership for Children Family Resource Center. This family resources center is a community hub for primarily like-missioned organizations serving children and families in our community.

The Partnership for Children's systems and programs are available to operate in times of disaster, as evidenced by our continued service throughout the global pandemic. We support child care facilities, so they have been able to stay open and allow essential workers to go to work. We help families in finding child care and other resources. Our tenants have continued their services for programs like speech therapy, mental and behavioral health, and autism services.

The Partnership for Children Family Resource Center has remained operational to support children and families in our community through disaster, worked tirelessly to strengthen capacity in the face of lost revenue opportunities, staffing shortages and challenges, and increased operational costs.

We must **always** remain ready to support children and families and provide a safe and sound space for families to receive multiple services in one convenient location. To continue serving the community, we must make necessary improvements to our building, so we have embarked on an infrastructure project. This project allows us to strengthen our Family Resource Center to meet the needs of our ever-growing population.

Community Collaboration:

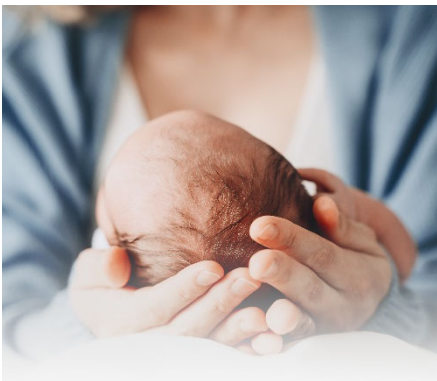
- 1) Our organization leads the Pre-K Education focus area as part of the Pathways for Prosperity anti-poverty coalition. Our staff members serve on committees, boards, and commissions, for example, The City of Fayetteville's Redevelopment Commission, Cumberland County Food Policy Council (including Fort Bragg), United Way – Community Impact Council, Strengths in Overcoming Adversity thru Resilience (SOAR) – Cumberland County Child Abuse Prevention Collaborative Workgroup, NC Early Education Coalition, NC Family Engagement Leadership Coalition, Action Pathways Board, Community Coalition Committee (Child Advocacy), Early Childhood Advisory Board: Chair (Fayetteville Tech), Cumberland County Educational Attainment Collaborative (Fayetteville Tech).
- 2) We collaborate with the City of Fayetteville management staff to help access and meet the city employee's child care needs through assessment and consumer education.
- 3) Our organization is one of the co-leads for North Carolina's first Community Child Abuse Prevention Plan.
- 4) PFC is the contract administrator for NC Pre-K in Cumberland County. We partner with Cumberland County Schools, Action Pathways with Head Start programs, and 57 licensed 4- or 5-star private child care centers for a current annual investment of over \$10 million in the community. Annually, since 2001, we have served more than 17,000 four-year-old children to help prepare them for entering kindergarten ready to learn.

Community Impact:

- 1) Of the approximately 31,066 children under age five in Cumberland County in 2021*, we reached an estimated 24,387 (79%) through at least one service provided through Smart Start funding allocated through our community grant funding process.
- 2) Through collaboration with the Department of Social Services, Fayetteville Technical Community College, and an internal subsidy program, our organization provided child care subsidy support for over 600 children and their families in Cumberland County FY 2020-21. At the end of June 2021, there were 972 children on the DSS waiting list.
- 3) We allocate nearly \$7 million annually in Smart Start funds for direct services that include two county agencies (DSS and the Health Department), three programs funded with Carolina Community Collaborative Care, as well as Fayetteville Technical Community College.
- 4) We have made a tremendous economic impact on our community. Since 1993, we have brought more than **\$300 million** into Cumberland County through State, Federal, and local funding.

*NC Office of Management and Budget, Population Projections by Single Age by Year.

Current Partnership Priorities:



Program/Services Support: Continue our coordinated family support services and early care and education support services to ease the burden on families.

Promote Sector Economic Stability:

Increase NC Pre-K rates to get private sites to market rate, and Cumberland County Schools and Head Start to the allowable state rate.



Provide Infrastructure

Support: Make necessary repairs to the infrastructure of the Family Resource Center, which will allow our organization and partner organizations to continue serving the community.

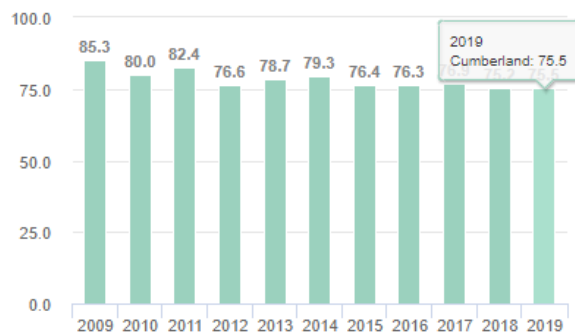


Overarching Acknowledgements:

- 1) **We have a high birth rate.** According to the March of Dimes, Cumberland County has a 30.6 point higher birth rate per 1,000 women 15-44 years than the North Carolina state average.

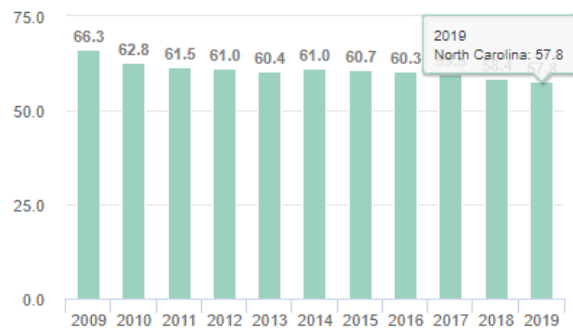
Birth rate: Cumberland, 2009-2019

Rate per 1,000 women 15-44 years



Birth rate: North Carolina, 2009-2019

Rate per 1,000 women 15-44 years



- 2) **We have a high child abuse and neglect rate.** Child abuse and neglect are contributing factors to infant deaths and poor childhood outcomes. As reported in The 2019 Community Health Assessment from the Cumberland County Health Department, "...the child abuse rate in Cumberland County has consistently remained higher than the state and regional rate."
- 3) **Early Care and Education reimbursements are not aligned.** The approximate cost of the NC Pre-K program is **\$9,100 a year per child**. The reimbursement rates are:

- a. Private providers **\$6,500 a year per child**.
- b. Cumberland County Schools NC Pre-K classrooms - **\$4,500 a year per child**.
- c. Head Start NC Pre-K classrooms **\$3,000 a year per child**.

Comparatively, the market rate for State Subsidy for the same age group is higher.

A 4-Star Privately owned provider - **\$7,700 per child per year**.

A 5-Star Privately owned provider - **\$7,950 per child per year**.

- 4) **We serve as the leading hub for services to children birth to five and their families.** Our Family Resource Center at 351 Wagoner Drive provides dozens of direct services to families and young children in Cumberland County.

Family Connects North Carolina, Southeastern Region

The Partnership for Children of Cumberland County is proud to be the home of Family Connects North Carolina, Southeastern Region. This program follows the evidence-based model of Family Connects International, implemented in Durham County in 2008.



Family Connects NC, Southeastern Region is a community-wide in-home nurse visiting program available to families with newborns in Cumberland, Hoke, or Robeson Counties.

Families who sign up and are eligible will receive a virtual visit by a specially trained registered nurse visit around three weeks after birth. There is no cost to the family.

Family Connects NC, Southeastern Region was implemented on October 4, 2021.

Statement of Program Need:

Children born in Cumberland County face risk factors such as low birth weight, poor prenatal care, child abuse and neglect, and death before year one. In addition, studies show that mothers in Cumberland County report high rates of postpartum depression and anxiety. Research has consistently shown that the birth of a baby is a time of vulnerability for **every** family. Family Connects data shows that 94% of families benefited from additional education or connections to community resources regardless of income.

High child abuse and neglect rates in Cumberland County: Evidence from the Family Connects model shows Families who participated in the program had a 44% lower rate of Child Protective Services investigations for suspected child abuse or neglect through child age 2; and a 39% lower investigation rate through child age 5.

Emergency Medical Care Costs: Evidence shows that infants whose families participated in the program had 50% fewer emergency room visits and hospital overnight stays in the first year of life. Fewer emergencies reduce the cost of health care. The study showed that:

At 6-month of age:

- **Every \$1 spent on the program resulted in a \$3.02 savings** on emergency care for infants at age six months.
 - Calculated per infant emergency medical costs using published rates = \$423 per ER visit and \$3,722 per hospital night
 - Average cost of emergency care for infants in the control group = \$165 per ER visit and \$2456 in overnight costs
 - Average emergency medical costs for participating infants = \$165 per ER visit and \$372 in overnight costs
 - Program costs for Family Connects participants = \$500-700

At 24-months of age:

- **Every \$1 spent in program costs resulted in \$3.17 in savings** through reductions in total child emergency medical costs billed through age 24 months.
 - Calculated per infant emergency medical care costs using hospital billing records.
 - Total child emergency medical care billing costs reduced by \$2,217 per child between birth and 24 months
 - Average program costs for Family Connects participants remains the same = \$500-700

Strain on human service organizations: We know that Cumberland County has a high abuse and neglect rate, which strains human service organizations such as DSS. In a letter of support, the Director of Cumberland County Department of Social Services wrote, "Our agency administers programs on behalf of the State of North Carolina such as child welfare services within Cumberland County, NC. Children whose families are served by child welfare services tend to be developmentally vulnerable due to trauma stemming from early abuse and neglect; and from common co-occurring challenges related to health difficulties. In our endeavor to serve these families, we collaborate with our community partners to provide programs and services that engage our customers in improving their quality of life. Innovations such as what you are proposing are a great asset in enhancing these efforts."

Measures of Success:

Families are connected to services.

Increased self-sufficiency of families served.

A decrease in incidents of child abuse and neglect.

A reduction in postpartum depression and clinical anxiety.

An increase in positive parenting behaviors.

Home environments are improving, safety is improved, and access to learning materials is increased.

By reducing the abuse and neglect rate, we also hope to ease the strain on DSS, Law Enforcement, and other human service agencies.

Partners:

Action Pathways
Alliance Behavioral Health
AmeriHealth Caritas
Better Health
Cape Fear Valley Health System
Carolina Collaborative Community Care (4C)
Central Carolina Doulas
Children's Developmental Services Agency of the Cape Fear
CityBlock Health
Cumberland Community Foundation
Cumberland County Health Department
Fayetteville Doulas
Hoke County Partnership for Children and Families
LATCH Breastfeeding and Postpartum Wellness Center
Methodist University
Pathways for Prosperity
Robeson County Partnership for Children
Senator Kirk deViere's office
The Fayetteville Doulas
United Way of Cumberland County

Type of Request: Program Support

This program, once fully implemented, will cost \$3,000,000 for Cumberland County births. Currently, this work is funded in part by North Carolina's Preschool Development Grant (PDG), Elizabeth A. Hudspeth Endowment Fund of the Cumberland Community Foundation, and the North Carolina Partnership for Children. While our funding is adequate at this point for the targets of the PDG pilot, as the program scope expands, additional local funding and support will be needed in the coming years.



The Family Resource Center

The Partnership for Children and 23 partner organizations share a 43,261 square foot building through strategic leasing to like-minded nonprofits and for-profit organizations collectively known as the Family Resource

Center (FRC). Notably, the FRC provides a cost-effective option for our smaller partner agencies and individual small businesses to lease affordable, collaborative space. We provide quality support, education, and technical assistance to child care centers – a vital component supporting economic development, highlighted during the pandemic in assuring essential services, including child care for frontline workers.

The FRC also provides a network of collaborative work that happens daily with public and private community agencies. In addition to our Smart Start and other family service programs, the FRC also provides a significant point of service for families and their children on the autism spectrum, including housing the NC Autism Society, The Autism Society of Cumberland County, and other ABA therapeutic services. The FRC also includes partners in speech therapy, foster care, mental health and family therapy services, and other small businesses.

Statement of Need:

- We are in the geographic center of Cumberland County and are in a hurricane/tropical storm-prone area.
- Our infrastructure has needed significant repairs since Hurricane Matthew in 2016 and, subsequently, Hurricane Florence in 2018. Ongoing impact to the building includes window leakage that resulted in a structural compromise, wall, ceiling, and floor finish damage, as well as mold and its related health concerns.
- We have been able to meet our community's basic needs despite disaster, including COVID. Current circumstances exacerbated and elevated all conditions and increased the cost to provide human services.

We are fortunate to own our building. However, due to funding source restrictions on facilities and capital expenditures, we can only provide an annual maintenance level budget from rental income and a small amount from state funding. Due to structural issues and severe weather-related damage that has occurred over the life of the building, safety issues have also arisen. If the building continues to sustain damage, our organization and partner agencies need to find

new offices to conduct business. Loss of the FRC would negatively impact families in the City of Fayetteville and Cumberland County and our tenants' small businesses.

In terms of small businesses, Child Care Resource & Referral services are among the region's leading organizations for supporting the quality enhancement, professional development, and higher education of the region's early care and education and school-age child care programs and professionals. As part of the state's network of 75 Partnerships for Children funded through state funding to serve children birth to five, we are considered a public and community facility. However, the Family Resource Center as a whole provides services to all ages of children and their families, as well as individuals needing services available on site such as counseling.

The Renovation

In 2019, we undertook a structural engineering assessment of the exterior walls and windows to determine where water enters the building interior during rain events and provide general recommendations for corrective actions. Due to changes in construction requirements in the decades since being built, the issues identified in the assessment left the building vulnerable to storms and water penetration.

The investigation consisted of reviewing the existing drawings, gathering historical data on past building performance regarding water entry into the building, destructive testing, visual inspection of the exterior walls, fenestration, parapets, and water testing. The original two-story building is circa 1988. An addition of approximately the same size as the original building was added a few years later. Both buildings are steel framed with metal stud and brick veneer exterior wall construction at most locations. Fleming and Associates in Fayetteville completed the assessment. The assessment is provided as Attachment 1, Exterior Wall Assessment. In June 2020, Fleming and Associates provided an original estimate of probable construction costs for complete repairs at \$1.212 million (Attachment 2, Probable Costs).

Our Board and Committees have worked with staff to review the estimated project. They determined that the best viable solution included requesting a multiple phase project, with the first not to exceed \$300,000. In October 2020, Fleming and Associates provided an outline of the work that could be completed on exterior wall repairs and windows based on that budget (Attachment 1, Outline of Phase 1 Scope of Work). The project was then bid out through required public notice. Fleming and Associates managed the project, and construction was awarded and completed by WxProofing for Phase 1 for most of the north-facing part of the building.

Phase 1 was estimated to cost \$300,000, which came in under budget at \$260,356. We raised enough funds to cover most of the initial construction project. While we initially planned to break the project into a four-stage, multi-year \$1.212 million rehabilitation project, the increased potential for hurricane and storm activity in an active repair project leaves the FRC vulnerable to continued damage to parts of the building that remain unrepaired. While our organization is approved for a loan to move into the next phase of repairs, our goal is to

minimize the need for loan funds that reduce our flexibility to provide a stable, sustainable routine maintenance plan. If PFC has to continue to manage emergent situations from damage caused by water infiltration and related hazards such as mold, we will have difficulty creating a sustainable maintenance plan.

Capital Project

The Facilities Committee recommended, and the Board of Directors approved, moving forward with the next steps for the project. We are in the process of finalizing the construction loan with First Bank.



Total Projected Budget for Project: \$1.7 million¹

\$300,000 Phase #1 - Completed

\$500,000 Phase #2

\$ 900,000 Final Phase

The anticipated cost for Phase 2 would be up to \$500,000. The current estimated timeline for the next phase of the project is below.

Timeline for Infrastructure Project Phase 2	
Activity	Projected Timeline
Research and apply for grant options for capital projects.	Ongoing (Private Foundations, Local government opportunities)
Close on Bank Financing construction loan ²	November 2021
Engage Steve Fleming to complete the design documents (plans and specifications) for Phase 2.	Engagement letter completed by November 2021
Design documents presented to committees and the Board of Directors	December 2021
Board approval for Infrastructure project to move to RFP for construction	December 2021
Prepare RFP and Post RFP (public notice)	January 2022
Receive RFP bids	January 2022
Facilities and Finance Committees review bids for construction	January 2022
Award contracts for construction	February 2022
Notice to proceed with construction	March 2022
Mobilization of the project; invoices for windows and initial materials	March 2022
Construction 4-5 months	July 2022

¹ The Structural Engineer estimate of \$1.2 million was increased due to additional damage found in the Lending Library walls during renovations, and additional costs associated with building materials and labor.

² PFCCC Board of Directors approved \$1 million for bank financing. The bank has determined it can underwrite \$1.3 million. If more than \$1 million is needed, we would seek Board authorization prior to encumbering anything over the approved \$1 million. No loan funds will be drawn down until mobilization of construction for Phase 2 begins.

Measures of Success:

Operations: We will have a more secure facility that can withstand adverse weather. Further, we can seamlessly sustain the organization while supporting satisfied tenants with their respective spaces and the continued opportunity to provide services in a collaborative environment.

Services: We will continue to provide a care system to benefit children and their families and the early child care professionals who support them.

Partner Organizations:

In addition to the 55 staff that work for the Partnership, **228** employees work for our partner's agencies listed below:

ADAPT- Arizona State University
Autism Society of Cumberland County
Autism Society of North Carolina
Building Blocks Early Education Centers, LLC
Boys and Girls Homes Of North Carolina, Inc.
Brown Therapeutic Solutions & Counseling, PLLC
Caring Hearts Behavioral Services, LLC
Carolina Center for ABA Services
Children's Home Society Of North Carolina
Clean World USA
Delmar Counseling Service

EmPowered2Shift, PLLC
First in Families
Gateway Communications
Hunnicut Corporation
Inner Pathways
JABEZ
Knight Consulting Services
Legacy Counseling Services
Pinnacle Family Services
Reality Is in The Mind
Soothing Minds
Step by Step Counseling

Sustainability:

In collaboration with an external consultant during this calendar year, PFCCC is developing a cross-cutting Sustainability Plan. The infrastructure project features in the plan through grant development and the ongoing maintenance plan for the facility. Our organization has tremendous opportunities historically in funding services through federal, state, and private support while providing some sustaining revenue through our leased spaces. Suppose we can keep the debt load down while improving the infrastructure of the building. In that case, we can move beyond corrective and deferred maintenance to creating a sustainable long-term maintenance plan that includes setting aside funds for a new roof and aging HVAC systems.



NC Pre-Kindergarten Program

The Partnership for Children of Cumberland County (PFC) is the contract administrator for the NC Pre-K program in Cumberland County. The program operates in 53 licensed child care centers throughout the County with a minimum 4- or 5-Star rating. Classrooms are staffed with a B-K licensed teacher for up to a cap of 18 children. In classrooms with more

than nine children, there must be a teacher assistant in place. The program runs for a 10-month school year, 6 ½ hours a day. Children must be four by August 31 and income-eligible for the program. Additional risk factors may be considered in determining eligibility for the program. The program is designed to serve the most at-risk children in the year before entering kindergarten. State funding covers approximately **61%** of the cost of the program.

Statement of Need Purpose:

The pandemic has exacerbated the issues for child care providers, including NC Pre-K providers. Enrollments are down, and finding qualified teachers has become increasingly difficult. NC Pre-K providers may not continue due to increasing demands and insufficient funding. Also, private providers often lose their licensed teachers to public schools, where salaries are higher, and staff has benefits. The time is now to look at how we can provide local funding to bridge the gap in costs for running this high-quality program. Workforce compensation is a critical factor in stabilizing NC Pre-K and the overall child care system.

Type of Project: Program Support Request

The original intent of the state program was for there to be local funding to assist with covering the cost. From the NIEER report in 2019, the approximate cost for the program is \$9,100 a year per child. The state pays private providers \$6,500 a year for each child served. In Cumberland County, a private provider can be reimbursed \$7,950 a year for subsidized care for a four-year-old in a 5-Star Center and \$7,700 for a 4-Star Center. Current state reimbursement for the NC PreK program, with more teacher qualifications and instruction requirements, is \$1,450 less than what a provider can receive for subsidized care for other four-year-olds in their program.

Partnership for Children negotiated the reimbursement rates for Cumberland County Schools and Head Start sites many years ago at less than the state allowed rate to provide sufficient NC Pre-K funds to attract private child care providers. While these programs have other funding streams to support their operations, we request funding to bring them to the state allowable

rates. The state rates are \$4,730 and \$4,000 a year, respectively. PFC currently pays \$4,500 and \$3,000 a year, respectively, per child enrolled.

The request to bring private sites to the current market rate and Cumberland County Schools and Head Start to the higher allowed rate is:

Private sites (930 allocated slots):	\$1,299,730
Cumberland County Schools (334 allocated slots):	76,820
Head Start (144 allocated slots):	<u>144,000</u>
Total	\$1,520,550

Measures of Success:

We will continue to provide high-quality pre-kindergarten programs to benefit children and the early child care professionals who support them.

Increase the number of filled slots.

Reduce turnover among NC Pre-K staff.

Partner Organizations:

NC Pre-K collaborates with the following Cumberland County Schools, Head Start, and Private child care sites.

Alderman Road Elementary	Just Like Mom
Arether's Little M&M's II	Kidz Kastle Child Care Center
Armstrong Elementary	KinderCare (Fort Bragg Road)
Baldwin Elementary	KinderCare (Hope Mills)
BalPerazim Childcare Center	KinderCare (Ramsey)
Ben Martin Elementary	Lake Rim Elementary
Brentwood Elementary	Loyd Auman Elementary
Brite Shinning Stars	Mommy's Moment Daycare Learning Center
Building Blocks Childcare Center	New Century International Elementary
C. Wayne Collier Elementary	Pamper Hugs & Luv's Afterschool Facility
Childcare Network #109	Panda Daycare I
Childcare Network #110	Panda Daycare III
Cliffdale Elementary	Ponderosa Elementary
Cozy Corner Child Development Center	Precious Moments Childcare II
Creative Enhancement	River Commons Head Start
Cumberland Mills Elementary	Sandy Ridge Child Care Center
District 7 Elementary	Sherwood Park Elementary
E. E. Miller Elementary	Spring Lake Head Start
E.E. Miller Head Start	Stedman Primary
Elizabeth Cashwell Elementary	Topeka Heights Head Start

First Steps Child Care	Trinity Child Care
FSU Early Childhood Learning Center	W.T. Brown Elementary
Gallberry Farm Elementary	Warrenwood Elementary
Hay Branson Head Start	Wee Wonders Christian Daycare
Heavenly Haven Academy	Westarea Elementary
Heavenly Haven Child Development Center	Wonder Years Child Development Center
Heavenly Haven II	

Sustainability:

Partnership for Children has provided stable and supportive pre-kindergarten program administration for Cumberland County for 20 years, from More at Four to the current NC Pre-Kindergarten program. The long-term goal for sustainability is to obtain stable local funding to maintain the pre-kindergarten program in Cumberland County.

Summary:

The Partnership for Children has successfully managed over \$300 million in service dollars and has had a primarily clean audit record for 28 years.

In total, the Partnership for Children of Cumberland needs nearly \$3 million for the current challenges outlined.

We are a large team of passionate professionals who provide resources, support, and programs that empower families, advance children's well-being and strengthen our community's early care and education system. We respectfully request collaborative funds from Cumberland County and the City of Fayetteville towards the project's planning, implementation, and completion. We will continue to identify other sources of grants and fundraising to complete the entire project.

We hope you will consider joining us in protecting our investment in Cumberland County and the City of Fayetteville and look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience. Our President, Mary Sonnenberg, would be happy to speak with you if you have follow-up questions.

NOTE: All the reference materials cited in this document can be found at ccpfc.org/updates