

HYBRID North Carolina Pre-Kindergarten Planning Committee Meeting

Agenda

Quorum is 12 = 50% + 1 (Total Board Members = 22)

Thursday, October 30, 2025

12:00 pm – 12:30 pm

Be the Driving Force to meet our roles and responsibilities as a non-profit Board by:

- *Providing Oversight* ➤ *Ensuring Adequate Resources* ➤ *Establishing a Strategic Direction*

	Topic	Presenter
I.	Determination of Quorum & Call to Order	Co-Chairs: Van Gunter / Dr. Eric Bracy / Maria Ford
II.	Action*	
	A. Minutes – Thursday, August 21, 2025	Maria Ford – Co-Chair
III.	Updates^Δ	
	A. Federal Shutdown Updates & Impacts B. Fiscal Update 1. September 2025 Financial Reports C. SFY 2025-2026 Reporting Program Progress and Updates 1. Updated 2025-2026 NC Pre-K Program Requirements and Guidance_ REVISIED October 2025/Summary of Changes 2. Application/Placement 3. Recruitment Efforts 4. Strengths and Barriers to Service Delivery	Mary Sonnenberg Carole Mangum Ar-Nita Davis
IV.	Adjourn^Δ	Maria Ford – Co-Chair

* Needs Action ^Δ Information Only ^ε Electronic Copy (Hard copies are available upon request) [!] Possible Conflict of Interest (Recusals)

^D Document Included in Packet

Partnership for Children of Cumberland County, Inc. - NC PRE-KINDERGARTEN GRANT

Fiscal Year 2025 / 2026

LEGEND	
09/30/2025	Internal Budget Adjustments
	Budget Increases per Amendment #

FY 25/26 Revenues per Contract	
\$ 8,931,970	NC Pre-k Grant Payments to Providers [Fund 206, Fund 210, Fund 319]
\$ -	NC Pre-k GEER Payments to Providers [Fund 336]
\$ 174,963	2% CCDF Quality/Admin Funds [Fund 328]
\$ -	2% CCDF ARPA Admin Funds [Fund 314]
\$ 507,440	6% Administrative Funds [Fund 211]
\$ 9,614,373	Total NC Pre-k Grant

as of SEPTEMBER 2025	
SHOULD BE	
25%	75%

		FY 25/26 Budget						Remaining	% of	% of
Activity		09/30/2025	July	August	September	Y-T-D	Budget	Budget Expended	Available Funds	
211	3323-999 Administrative Operations	\$159,440	\$ 11,151.84	\$ 11,480.86	\$ 17,468.64	\$ 40,101.34	\$ 119,338.66	25%	75%	
	3323-001 CCR&R - Core	\$80,000	\$ 2,967.77	\$ 8,870.47	\$ 10,474.09	\$ 22,312.33	\$ 57,687.67	28%	72%	
	3323-017 NC Pre-k Coordination (In-Direct)	\$268,000	\$ 17,495.02	\$ 22,666.30	\$ 19,330.78	\$ 59,492.10	\$ 208,507.90	22%	78%	
	Fund 211 Sub-Total	\$ 507,440.00	\$ 31,614.63	\$ 43,017.63	\$ 47,273.51	\$ 121,905.77	\$ 385,534.23	24%	76%	
206	2342-015 NC Pre-k Subsidy (Direct - Child Reimbursement) - State Funds	\$688,756	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 688,756.00	0%	100%	
	2348-015 NC Pre-K Non-TANF/CCDF - State Funds	\$254,745	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 254,745.00	0%	100%	
	Fund 206 Sub-Total	\$ 943,501.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 943,501.00	0%	100%	
210	2342-015 NC Pre-k Subsidy (Direct - Child Reimbursement) - State Funds	\$3,343,434	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,343,434.00	0%	100%	
	2348-015 NC Pre-K Non-TANF/CCDF - State Funds	\$1,236,613	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,236,613.00	0%	100%	
	Fund 210 Sub-Total	\$ 4,580,047.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4,580,047.00	0%	100%	
319	2342-015 NC Pre-k Subsidy TANF (Direct - Child Reimbursement) - Federal Funds	\$2,726,738	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 374,599.00	\$ 374,599.00	\$ 2,352,139.00	14%	86%	
	2348-015 NC Pre-K Non-TANF/CCDF - Federal Funds	\$681,684	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 102,098.00	\$ 102,098.00	\$ 579,586.00	15%	85%	
	Fund 319 Sub-Total	\$ 3,408,422.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 476,697.00	\$ 476,697.00	\$ 2,931,725.00	14%	86%	
328	3323-017 NC Pre-K CCDF Quality Funds-ADMIN-Federal Funds	\$116,000	\$ 9,165.49	\$ 10,913.49	\$ 10,797.81	\$30,876.79	\$85,123.21	27%	73%	
328	3323-999 NC Pre-K CCDF Quality Funds-Administrative Operations	\$58,963	\$ 6.48	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 15,006.48	\$ 43,956.52	25%	75%	
	Fund 328 Sub-Total	\$ 174,963.00	\$ 9,171.97	\$ 20,913.49	\$ 15,797.81	\$ 45,883.27	\$ 129,079.73	26%	74%	

Total Budget Remaining	\$ 8,969,886.96
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SHOULD BE	
25%	75%

Activity	FY 25/26 Budget				Remaining Budget	% of Budget Expended	% of Available Funds
	09/30/2025	July	August	September			

Unallocated NC Pre-k Revenues	\$ -				
Total NC Pre-k Grant Expended		\$ 40,786.60	\$ 63,931.12	\$ 539,768.32	\$ 644,486.04
Total State Funds	\$ 6,030,988.00				
Total Federal Funds	\$ 3,583,385.00				
Total NC Pre-K Grant	\$ 9,614,373.00				

2025-2026 NC Pre-K Program Requirements and Guidance – Summary of Changes

Section 4: The NC Pre-K Site – A: Facility Requirements

Guidance has been added to provide information about Pathway to the Stars.

Guidance **NEW**

Pathways to the Stars, [Section .3200, Standards for Two through Five Star Rated Licenses](#) became effective July 1, 2025. Pathways to the Stars incorporates recommendations for change, such as:

- Offering a choice of three pathways to demonstrate quality and earn a 2-5 Star Rated License.
- Updating education standards for early childhood educators to expand options; and
- Adding standards for both educators and facilities that support continuous quality improvement and family/community engagement and leadership best practices.

Pathway #1: Program Assessment

This pathway allows a program to demonstrate quality through practices that are research-based and measurable through a published and well-known assessment tool, the Environment Rating Scale.

Pathway #2: Classroom & Instructional Quality

This pathway allows a program to demonstrate quality through smaller groups of children, implementation of curriculum, child-focused planning and training/coaching to support classroom and instructional quality.

Pathway #3 – Accreditation and Head Start

These accreditations have earned a **Three Star Rated License** pathway, based on programmatic requirements:

- National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA)
- National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC)
- American Montessori Society (AMS)
- International Montessori Council (IMC)

These accreditations have earned a **Five Star Rated License** pathway, based on educational and programmatic requirements:

- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
- National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs (NAC)
- COGNIA, with early learning standards

Head Start and Early Head Start programs also have a **Five Star Rated License** pathway.

Please see the resources below for additional guidance.

Section 5: The NC Pre-K Classroom – K: Early Literacy Assessments *NEW*

New subsection added to provide additional information about GOLDFinch™ by Teaching Strategies® and the required early literacy assessment.

K: Early Literacy Assessments *NEW*

GOLDFinch™ by Teaching Strategies®

N.C.G.S. § 115C-83.4B requires the Department of Public Instruction to establish an Early Literacy Program which ensures the administration of a formative assessment to children at the conclusion of their participation in the NC Pre-K program to determine their kindergarten readiness and the alignment of their literacy instruction with the Science of Reading. *GOLDFinch™ by Teaching Strategies®* has been selected as the state-approved early literacy assessment tool and is being provided to all NC Pre-K classrooms.

Finch™ Literacy Screener - REQUIRED

This game-based universal literacy screener for children identifies children who may be at risk for reading difficulties and dyslexia. The assessment generates a screener report and automatically feeds GOLD® portfolios with preliminary levels.

NC Pre-K teachers shall administer the Finch™ Literacy Screener for all enrolled children and shall communicate results and recommended next steps with families. At a minimum, screenings shall be completed upon program entry and again mid-year to monitor progress and plan interventions.

All Finch™ Literacy Screeners must be completed by Spring 2026.

Finch™ Formative Games – OPTIONAL

This game-based assessment includes fun, age-appropriate games that can be completed in less than 5 minutes per week and automatically feeds GOLD® portfolios with preliminary levels.

Guidance

North Carolina Finch™ Implementation Path

- Login to SmartTeach® and verify that the correct children are active in your class.
- [Download the Finch App](#) and log in with your SmartTeach® credentials.
- Utilize the [Finch User Guides](#) to help you get started!
- **Finch Formative Games (Optional)**
 - Complete Recommended Online PD in the Develop area of *SmartTeach®: Getting Started With Finch Formative Games (1hr)*
 - Review Support Article: [Finch Formative Games User Guide](#)
- **Literacy Screener (Required)**
 - Complete Online PD in the Develop area of *SmartTeach®: Getting Started With Finch Literacy Screener (1hr)*
 - Review Support Articles: [Finch Literacy Screener User Guide](#)
 - [How to Administer the Literacy Screener](#)
 - Complete the [Home Language Survey](#) for each child who will take the Literacy Screener

Section 7: Evaluation and Monitoring – A: ECERS-R Assessments

This requirement has been updated to reflect changes to NC Child Care Rule .3002.

“ECERS-R” has been replaced with “ECERS-3” throughout the full document.

Previous Language	Updated Language
<p>A. ECERS-R Assessments</p> <p>All NC Pre-K licensed programs in public schools and private child care facilities shall have an assessment completed every three years using the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale Revised Edition (ECERS-R) assessment tool as a part of the rated license reassessment process. This will be conducted at the time of the star rated license reassessment. At least one NC Pre-K classroom shall be selected for an assessment during the reassessment process.</p> <p>NC Pre-K classrooms must score a minimum of 5.0. Classrooms that score below 5.0, shall be reassessed the following year and a minimum score of 5.0 must be achieved in order to continue to be approved as a NC Pre-K site</p>	<p>A. ECERS-3 Assessments *REVISED*</p> <p>10A NCAC 09 .3002 FACILITY REQUIREMENTS</p> <p>(b) NC Pre-K programs that have earned a four-or five-star rated license using the program assessment licensure pathway or the classroom instructional quality licensure pathway in Rules .3203 and .3205 of this Chapter shall have an assessment completed every three years using the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Third Edition assessment tool.</p> <p>Classrooms that score below 5.0 shall be reassessed the following year and a minimum score of 5.0 must be achieved in order to continue to be approved as a NC Pre-K site. At least one NC Pre-K classroom shall be selected for an assessment during the reassessment process.</p> <p>NC Pre-K programs that have earned a four-or five-star rated license using the accreditation and Head Start licensure pathway in Rule .3207 of this Section are not required to have an assessment and shall instead comply with standards set forth by those organizations regarding program quality standards.</p>

Guidance **NEW**

The ECERS-3 requirement is based on the selected pathway by which the facility earned its four or five-star license. It is not based on individual classrooms.

Pathway #1: Program Assessment – ECERS-3 Assessment is REQUIRED

Pathway #2: Classroom & Instructional Quality – ECERS-3 Assessment is REQUIRED

Pathway #3 – Accreditation and Head Start – ECERS-3 Assessment is NOT REQUIRED

Please see the resources below for additional guidance.

- [Pathways to the Stars Info Session slide deck](#)
- [Pathways to the Stars Questions and Answers](#)