



**Planning & Evaluation Committee**

Tuesday, February 3, 2025

1:00 pm – 3:00 PM

In-Person Meeting / Zoom

*Be the Driving Force . . .*

*. . . to engage partners to achieve lasting positive outcomes for all children, beginning at birth.*

**I. Determination of Quorum & Call to Order – Chair**

*Quorum = 4 of 7 total committee members or 50%*

A. Chair's Comments Felicia Johnson

**II. Approval of Minutes**

August 5, 2025 & December 2, 2025\*

**III. President's Report**

Provided in Packet for Review

**IV. Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation** Pamela Federline

- A. FY 2025-2026 Q2 Data
- B. Program Module Update- CED
- C. PFCC Formal Site Visit Schedule
- D. RFP Allocation Timeline and Preparation
- E. Strategic Planning Review and Feedback (bulk of meeting time)

**V. Information**<sup>Δ</sup> Pamela Federline

- A. Reminder: Complete contact and other required Committee forms
- B. 2<sup>nd</sup> Grilled Cheese Festival- November 7<sup>th</sup>
- C. Little Land 2026-March 14<sup>th</sup>
- D. Little Land 2027- March 16<sup>th</sup>

**VI. Adjournment**

Felicia Johnson

**A. Next meetings – 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.\***

- a. April 7, 2026
- b. June 2, 2026



**Partnership for Children of Cumberland County, Inc.  
 Planning and Evaluation Committee  
 August 5 2025 (1:06 pm – 2:25 pm)**



**P&E MEMBERS PRESENT:** Dr. Nicole Lucas, Dr. Ginny Kaplan, Kandy Dillion  
**P&E MEMBERS ABSENT:** Dr. Jacqueline Lancaster-Covington, Ayanna Richard  
**STAFF SUPPORT PRESENT:** Pamela Federline, Heather Gallagher, Steven Gipson, Carole Mangum, Marie Lilly, Karen Staab  
**GUESTS:**

AGENDA ITEM	DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATION	ACTION	FOLLOW-UP
I. Determination of Quorum & Call to Order	A. Dr. Lucas called the meeting to order at 1:06 pm	Called to Order	
II. Review and Approval of Minutes a) Minutes from August 6, 2024	A. The Planning and Evaluation Committee minutes from June 3, 2025, were reviewed and approved as corrected. B. Three committee vacancies: Rebecca Jackson and Amy Cannon stepped down; Carl Mitchell Retired C. Search for new Committee members- Pamela has reached out to a few potential candidates and asked the Committee to let her know if they know anyone who would be a good fit.	N. Lucas called for a motion to accept the minutes. KD made the motion. GK seconded. Motion passed unanimously	
III. President's Report	A. The President's Report was reviewed by Pamela Federline		
IV. Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation	A. Year-End Reporting- FY 2024-25 B. Program Reviews in progress C. CDMS Data Templates for FY 24-25 D. DSP Meeting- Wednesday, August 20 <sup>th</sup> , 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm,		
V. Information	A. Reminder- Complete contact and other required Committee forms B. Grilled Cheese Festival with Dirt Bag Ales- November 15, 2025-tickets on sale now C. Little Land 2026- March 14, 20206 D. Little Land 2027- March 16, 2027 E. Suggestion that future meetings be virtual a. After a brief discussion, it was decided that P&E Committee meetings would be hybrid unless the Committee needed to be together to work on a project.		
VI. Meeting Adjourned	N. Lucas adjourned the meeting at 2:25 pm.	Meeting Adjourned The next P&E Meeting will be in person at PFC and via Zoom	Steven Gipson will send invitations.

**Approval:** Based on committee consensus, the minutes of the above-stated meeting are hereby approved as presented and/or corrected.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Submittal:** The minutes of the above-stated meeting are submitted for approval.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Planning and Evaluation Contract Activity Description (CAD) Changes – FY 2024-25

### Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R)- Contract Activity Description (CAD) Change

#### Rationale for the Change:

During the Annual Submission of Activities, we review activities to determine if any changes need to be made. CCR&R recommends the following changes to their current CAD, effective May 15, 2025, after Board approval on April 24, 2025. This CAD will roll over to FY 2025-26.

- The yellow highlighted section is additional wording to reflect work with Start-Up child care facilities or family child care homes.
- The green highlighted section may be deleted due to the budget selections made in the new system, which could create duplication.

Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) is aligned with the North Carolina CCR&R System to provide CCR&R services that meet NC CCR&R Council-specific outputs and outcomes. Services may include technical assistance, training for child care providers, consumer education, and/or consumer referral. Services that are provided in this activity include: (1) Technical assistance: Technical assistance in the form of coaching and modeling provided to early childhood educators working in **pre-licensed start-ups and** licensed child care facilities serving children from birth to five years old. The Technical Assistance activity will be focused on improving and maintaining star-rated license levels. It may also include improving ERS (ECERS, ITERS, FCCERS), PAS/BAS, CLASS, and POEMS assessment scores. Technical Assistance may also include coaching on professional development planning and advising. (2) Training for child care providers: Training for DCDEE credit hours provided on child care-related topics and coordination of CEU opportunities. (3) Consumer education: Information and/or education to families about quality child care. (4) Consumer referral: Referring families to local child care options. Smart Start funds may ~~be used to~~ cover expenses for **Committee hosted** meetings and/or training and recruitment events. Following programmatic guidelines, grants may be provided through **cash and/or non-cash grants, including incentives, bonuses, materials, and/or program management tools.**

#### Recommendation:

Two-part Recommendation approved by the P&E Committee on April 1, 2025:

1. Approve the recommended CAD change to CCR&R to add '**pre-licensed start-ups.**'
2. Strike the sections as noted as recommended by our VP of Finance (remove Committee), and follow Smart Solutions template language to add non-cash and/or cash grants following NCPC updated language. (See below)

**Discretionary Section:** Smart Start funds may be used for (choose all that apply)

1. Child care for program participants
2. Transportation for program participants
3. Translation/Interpretation services for program
4. Non-cash grants including incentives
5. Cash grants including incentives
6. Duplicative, already assumed for this program Hosted meeting/conference costs incurred for program (add description) a. TEXT BOX
7. The Standards of Quality for Family Strengthening and Support is being used to support the quality of this solution.



**Partnership for Children of Cumberland County, Inc.  
 Planning and Evaluation Committee  
 December 2, 2025 (1:10 pm – 1:59 pm)**



**P&E MEMBERS PRESENT:** Felicia Johnson, Dr. Ayanna Richard  
**P&E MEMBERS ABSENT:** Dr. Jacqueline Lancaster-Covington, Dr. Ginny Kaplan, Kandy Dillion,  
**STAFF SUPPORT PRESENT:** Pamela Federline, Steven Gipson, Marie Lilly, Mary Sonnenberg, Daniele Malvesti  
**GUESTS:**

AGENDA ITEM	DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATION	ACTION	FOLLOW-UP
I. Determination of Quorum & Call to Order	A. Felicia Johnson called the meeting to order at 1:10 pm B. Felicia Johnson was introduced as the new chair of the P&E Committee C. The committee was asked to reach out to people to other they believe would be an asset to the P&E Committee.	Called to Order	
II. Review and Approval of Minutes	A. The Planning and Evaluation Committee minutes from August 5, 2025 were not approved as there was no quorum B.		
III. President's Report	A. The President's Report was reviewed by Mary Sonnenberg		
IV. Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation	A. Strategic Thinking Questions- Mary S. reviewed these questions with the committee B. FY 2025-26 Q1 Data- Pamela F. reviewed the data that was submitted to NCPC for Q1. C. Program Module Update-MPP & CED D. NCPC Monitoring- Pamela F. gave updates on Susan Clark's progress on completing NCPC's monitoring E. PFCC Formal Site Visit Schedule		
V. Information	A. Reminder- Complete contact and other required Committee forms B. Grilled Cheese Festival with Dirt Bag Ales- This event was a success. The data for next year has been set for November 7th C. Little Land 2026- March 14, 20206 D. Little Land 2027- March 16, 2027		
VI. Meeting Adjourned	A. Felicia J. adjourned the meeting at 1:59 pm.	Meeting Adjourned The next P&E Meeting will be in person at PFC and via Zoom	Steven Gipson will send invitations.

**Approval:** Based on committee consensus, the minutes of the above-stated meeting are hereby approved as presented and/or corrected.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Submittal:** The minutes of the above-stated meeting are submitted for approval.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**President's Report**  
**Executive Committee (Acting on Behalf of Board)**  
**Hybrid (Multipurpose Conference Room and ZOOM)**  
Thursday, January 29, 2026

**A. NCPC/DCDEE Updates / Legislative Updates**

**1. NCPC**

- This month's special stories focus on the Child Care Health Consultant program that is located at Cumberland County Health Department.
- NCPC will be submitting a proposal for the CORE RFA when it is released in February.
- Carry-forward caps were decreased by 10% for FY 26. **Our cap will be \$190,261.**
- Marta Hester's Public Policy Email is attached. If anyone would like information on the presentation by New Mexico referenced, contact me.

**2. DCDEE**

- **Region 5:** Payment for these activities continues to be up to date. Special Projects have ended and are being closed out. We are awaiting information from CCRI (Child Care Resources Inc. – Charlotte) and Early Years on how these projects will be operating moving forward.
- **SWCDC has provided us with monitoring requests for our Region 5 Contracts.** Carole Mangum will be leading that response.
- **DCDEE will be releasing the RFA for CORE services February 15.**
- **CCRI** has done listening sessions regarding the RFA for CORE services in the South-Central region of NC. We met with them on December 15.
- **NC Pre-K:** Pre-contracting documents for FY27 have been submitted. Waiting for the amendment to increase administrative funds to be executed. The amendment for an increase of \$166,134 will be effective January 30, 2026 through June 30, 2026.

**3. State Level**

- NC continues to be the only state without a final state budget for FY26.
- For details of the session and federal updates, refer to the NC Center for Nonprofits' [January 23 Public Policy update](#).

**4. Federal Level**

- The federal government is under a continuing resolution through January 30, 2026. Budget negotiations are in progress. Information on the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2026 is included in Marta Hester's email.

**5. Local Level**

- Partnership staff will attend the **Second Military Community Childcare Roundtable** on January 29 at FTCC.

**B. Grant Opportunities/Updates/RFPs**

- Our County and City of Fayetteville grants are all active. Requests for reimbursements and data requests are being managed by fiscal and programmatic staff.
- Building construction is moving forward. The construction schedule has had some delays and now will go into February. Mike provides updates to staff and tenants as different areas are impacted. Finish work is being done in Conference Room B and the Charles Morris Conference Room. Cannon Foundation funding for the project has been received. We have invoiced the City of Fayetteville for a

part of payment for the first Pay Ap. The construction loan was used for the other part of that payment.

- The grant cycle for FY27 for Cumberland County's Community Funding projects has been released. Grants are due by January 30. Proposals for Family Connects funding and the Early Childhood Workforce Development will be submitted.
- The City of Fayetteville is convening leverage partners who were part of their initial Choice Neighborhoods Grant application to determine continued partnerships in preparation for a new grant cycle.

#### C. Staff Updates

- **Early Literacy and Play Coordinator and Communications – recruiting and interviewing.** If you are interested in or would like to refer a candidate for these full-time positions, please contact Anthony Ramos ([aramos@ccpfc.org](mailto:aramos@ccpfc.org)) for more information.

#### D. Events/Recognitions

- **NC Pre-K Let's Get Enrolled – Applications for the 2026-2027 school year launched on January 21.** Please share the URL: [LetsGetEnrolled.com](https://letsgetenrolled.com). Contact Ar-Nita Davis ([adavis@ccpfc.org](mailto:adavis@ccpfc.org)). Promotional materials for the 2026-2027 school year have been released on social media and are posted on our website. Cumberland County Schools is also sharing the information across multiple platforms. Families can still apply for vacancies this school year.
- **Barnes and Noble Book Drive** – The combined total for Round 1 and 2 delivery of books in November and December was **1,875 books** with an in-kind value of **\$13,651.81**. A final delivery of books in January yielded **285 books** with an in-kind value of **\$1,844.15**. The total number of books donated was **2,160 books** with an in-kind value of **\$15,495.96**. If you happen to find yourself at BN - Fayetteville please make a point to thank Jennifer Wittmann and her team for all of their ongoing support and for selecting us for over a decade to be the recipient of their book drive.
- **Freedom Christian Academy's National Honor Society Book Drive** – The students collected **365 children's books** for an in-kind value of **\$2,480.38** to support local literacy and put stories directly into the hands of children. The IT Department team at PFC were part of thanking the students for their service to our community.
- **Giving Tuesday:** The Cumberland Community Foundation's Giving Tuesday event wrapped up and the required survey is due to CCF by February 6. **Giving Tuesday donations were amplified through generous donors to the Cumberland Community Foundation. Our final direct donations were \$8,931.17 and the amplification was \$1,851.30 for a total of \$10,782.47.**
- **Little Land BIG Play for Families 2026 – Save the date for March 14, 2026 from 10:00 am – 2:00 pm at the Crown Expo Center.** The website is updated and live. Now accepting vendor applications: <https://ccpfc.org/littleland/little-land-vendor-agreement/>. We will need volunteers for this activity. If you are able to assist, contact Daniele Malvesti-Petti ([dmalvesti@ccpfc.org](mailto:dmalvesti@ccpfc.org)).
- **Provider Appreciation Event** – Hold the date for May 2, 2026 at FTCC from 5:00 – 9:00 pm. More details to come. If you have questions, contact Julanda Jett, VP of Programs ([jjett@ccpfc.org](mailto:jjett@ccpfc.org)).
- **Grilled Cheese Festival – Save the date for November 7, 2026.**

## **Special Stories January 2026**

### **Child Care Health Consultants Activity (Cumberland County Health Department)**

#### **Story 1: Strengthening Health Practices Through On-Site Consultation**

Child Care Health Consultant provided targeted technical assistance to a licensed child care center experiencing frequent illness-related exclusions and staff uncertainty around sanitation and illness policies. Through on-site observation, the CCHC identified gaps in handwashing procedures, cleaning and sanitizing practices, and staff understanding of illness exclusion guidelines.

The CCHC provided hands-on coaching, visual reminders for classrooms, and policy guidance aligned with licensing and public health recommendations. As a result, staff demonstrated increased confidence in implementing health practices, illness-related questions decreased, and the center reported improved consistency in sanitation routines. This collaboration strengthened the program's ability to maintain a healthier environment for children and staff.

#### **Story 2: Supporting Challenging Behaviors and Staff Well-Being**

This quarter, a CCHC supported a child care classroom experiencing frequent biting and aggressive behaviors that were impacting staff morale and classroom stability. Through classroom observation and reflective conversations, the CCHC helped staff identify developmental triggers, environmental stressors, and opportunities for proactive support.

The CCHC introduced trauma-informed strategies, visual schedules, and consistent transition supports while modeling supportive language and “serve and return” interactions. Staff reported feeling more supported and better equipped to respond calmly and consistently to challenging behaviors. Over time, the frequency of incidents decreased, and the classroom environment became more regulated and nurturing.

These stories illustrate how CCHC services positively influence child health, staff confidence, and program stability by providing relationship-based, practical support tailored to each child care setting.

**From:** Marta Hester <[mhester@smartstart.org](mailto:mhester@smartstart.org)>

**Subject:** Smart Start Network Public Policy Update for Week of January 19 - 23, 2026

Good morning,

**Please be advised next Friday's Smart Start Network Public Policy Meeting scheduled for January 30, 2026, will be held at 9:00am to 10:00am.** We will have a *Fireside Chat with our Smart Start Advocates, The Raleigh Group*. We are changing the time to accommodate our advocates' schedules. Discussion will include conversations about our Smart Start priorities, NC General Statutes, mid-term elections, outlook on the 2026 legislative session, and more.

I am attaching presentations from last Friday's Smart Start Network Public Policy Meeting on New Mexico's universal child care and on *Defend the Spend*, which requires states to provide additional justification in the payment management system for Child Care and Development Funding (CCDF). We appreciate Elizabeth Hayes joining our public policy call last week to provide more information.

## STATE UPDATE

### **Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services**

The [Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services](#) met on January 13, 2026, to hear how the state is handling new administrative rules for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) stemming from H.R.1 (One Big Beautiful Bill Act). Counties are currently estimating to need a cumulative \$67 million in additional administrative funding, and the state may need to provide up to \$420 million toward SNAP benefits, though that number could decrease as counties lower their error rates in eligibility determinations. Presentations were provided by NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Brunswick County Department of Social Services, and the North Carolina Retail Merchants Association. For more detailed information, see the presentations in the link as follows: [Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services Non Standing Committee - North Carolina General Assembly](#)

### **Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Medicaid**

NC Medicaid and NC Department of Commerce reported on their perspectives on H.R. 1 Changes to Medicaid Work Requirements and Eligibility Determinations, to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Medicaid on January 13, 2026. Kevin Leonard, Director of NC County Commissioners Association, also shared the counties' perspectives on increased Medicaid administrative requirements resulting from H.R.1., and the burden it will cause counties. For more detailed information, go to [Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Medicaid Non Standing Committee - North Carolina General Assembly](#)

### **NC Child Care Commission**

The North Carolina Child Care Commission will hold its [Third Quarter Meeting](#) on Monday, February 2, 2026, beginning at 10:00 a.m., at the Division Headquarters, 1915 Health Services Way, Conference Rooms 01110 A & B, Raleigh, N.C. 27607. There will also be an option to join the meeting via WebEx by clicking on the following link:

<https://ncgov.webex.com/ncgov/j.php?MTID=m0514ed56ca232c8ab03304bef54c0dca>

## NC Division of Child Development and Early Education: Market Rate

NC DCDEE currently operates using the 2021 Market Rate; however, House Bill 412 (Session Law 2025-36) requires DCDEE to complete a new market rate study by May 1, 2026, and to make it available to the public. This market rate study should include potential rates that are not segmented by star-rating and new market rates for the QRIS system.

According to ACF guidance, states must use current market rates for child care provider payments to be in compliance with federal guidelines to receive CCDF funding. As mentioned previously, Candace Witherspoon, DCDEE Director, advised the agency will request a mini budget early in the 2026 session and address the issue with ACF to ensure NC is in compliance.

## NC Elections

All 100 N.C. House and all 50 N.C. Senate seats are up for election this year. See updated information and resources below:

- [Unofficial Primary Election Candidates for 2027 NC House](#) (updated through January 20, 2026)
- [Unofficial - Primary Election Filing for 2027 Senate](#) (updated through January 20, 2026)
- [North Carolina's 2026 primary elections: What you need to know - EdNC](#)
- [More than 100 NC candidates switched parties. Here's what they say about why - NewsBreak](#)

## FEDERAL UPDATE

### Child Care Development Fund Proposed Rules

As mentioned in the Smart Start Network Public Policy Update on January 9, 2026, the comment period on the Proposed CCDF Rule on *Restoring Flexibility in the Child Care and Development Fund*, will end on **February 4, 2026**. US DHHS, ACF, proposes to amend CCDF regulations to reduce costs and burden for states and territories administering the program. It proposes 1.) rescinding the requirements to limit family co-payments to 7 percent of family income, 2.) to provide some direct services through grants or contracts, 3.) to pay providers based on child's enrollment, and 4.) to pay providers prospectively that were added to the CCDF regulations in the March 2024 final rule, *Improving Child Care Access, Affordability, and Stability in the Child Care and Development Fund*. For more information and to submit comments to the rule, go to [Federal Register :: Restoring Flexibility in the Child Care and Development Fund \(CCDF\)](#)

### Federal Appropriations Progress

Congress has until next Friday, January 30, 2026, to pass the annual appropriations bills to avoid another federal government shutdown. Earlier this week the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2026, to include the House and Senate Appropriations Committees [proposed legislation to fully fund the government](#) through the rest of Fiscal Year 2026, was released. The consolidated package includes funding for the Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, Labor, Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, Defense, and Homeland Security. The House will vote on the funding package this week and the Senate will vote next week. A high-level summary of some of the proposed highlights is provided below:

- \$8.8 billion for the Child Care and Development Block Grant, an increase of **\$85 million above the 2025 level**.
- \$12.4 billion for Head Start, an **increase of \$85 million above the 2025 level**.
- Flat funding of \$315 million for the Preschool Development Grants.

- \$4 billion for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, an increase of \$20 million above the 2025 level.
- \$18.4 billion for Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies.
- \$2.2 billion for Title II-A (Supporting Effective Instruction State Grants).
- \$15.5 billion for Special Education, an increase of \$23 million above the 2025 level (funding for IDEA Preschool).
- \$1.6 billion for Impact Aid, an increase of \$5 million above the 2025 level.
- \$75 million for Child Care Access Means Parents in School.

### **Funding Freeze**

A federal judge's two-week temporary restraining order preventing the federal government from freezing over \$10 billion in child care and family assistance funding in five states is set to expire today, January 23, 2026. The freeze and temporary restraining order is applicable to the following states: Minnesota, Colorado, California, Illinois, and New York. Here is an article with more details: [As \\$10B in federal child care funds hangs in the balance, cities and counties brace for budget shock | Smart Cities Dive](#)

Finally, please continue to keep me posted on your upcoming meetings with elected officials and share information about concerns you are hearing from families, providers, and other early childhood stakeholders.

Thank you,

Marta



**Marta T. Hester**  
Public Policy Director

**The North Carolina Partnership for Children**  
1100 Wake Forest Rd, Raleigh, NC 27604



ADMINISTRATION FOR  
**CHILDREN & FAMILIES**

## Office of Child Care



## News

The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) provides funding to states, territories, and Tribes which is critical to supporting working families throughout the country. In light of recent allegations of child care fraud, the Department of Health and Human Services has activated Defend the Spend for all CCDF grantees. It is the goal of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) for there to be no disruption to child care payments for legitimate services provided.

You may recall from last spring that Defend the Spend requires grantees to complete a mandatory field in the Payment Management System (PMS) when requesting a drawdown of funds. We ask that grantees provide the following information in this justification field:

- Grantee's attestation that they have reviewed, made any necessary updates, and are implementing strategies and controls to identify fraud and ensure program integrity, including verification of child enrollment and attendance submissions.
- A strong justification for the use of funds that aligns with CCDF program purposes, that at a minimum includes a description or summary of expenses or activities, by CCDF expenditure category (i.e., direct services, quality activities, infant/toddler quality activities, administrative costs).

ACF has surged capacity with additional internal and contract support to ensure expeditious review of DTS submissions. Please do not hesitate to reach out to your OCC Regional Office or to [OCCInfo@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:OCCInfo@acf.hhs.gov) should you have questions or need additional support.

SOAR Work  
PFC Board Meeting Summary

**Partnership for Children Goal Areas**

<p><b>Organizational Development</b></p> <p>Internal Capacity to Realize our Mission and Achieve Greater Impact</p>	<p><b>Community Engagement</b></p> <p>Families and Communities Play a Leading Role</p>	<p><b>Strengthening Partnerships</b></p> <p>An Innovative and Connected System</p>	<p><b>Programs</b></p> <p>High-Quality Opportunities for All Children</p>
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**Strengths: What can we build on?**

1. What have we done well so far?
2. What are we most proud of so far?
3. What positive aspects of the program have children/families, providers, board, staff, community, and others commented on?
4. What makes the program unique?

*Organizational Development*

- Made the best possible outcome with external context has given us We've faced a lot of external changes. Ability to keep things running despite budget changes
- Survival
- Senior staff
- Qualified, passionate staff with longevity.
- Ability to pivot during crises (COVID, funding cuts).
- Strong community trust and presence since 1993.
- Meetings
- Pre-Meeting info sent out timely for review
- Transparent – local and state info is brought back
- Qualified staff – different levels
- New NC Pre-K enrollment system
- Embracing children and collaboration
- Sound policies and procedures
- Ensuring qualified professional development funding

*Community Engagement*

- Events like Little Land and Grilled Cheese Festival, county fair, etc., makes a positive difference.
- Branded in the community with child care
- Events like Little Land remove barriers and connect families to resources.
- Collaborative spirit through attending other entities' events.
- Fundraising initiatives (e.g., Grilled Cheese Festival) that also build awareness and relationships.
- Collaboration with enrollment tactics (CCS able to mirror PFC's practice with physical signs throughout the County).
- Sean and Ming talk constantly, sharing ideas to have the best collaborative effort.
- All have the same goal in mind – ensuring that the children in Cumberland County get the early childhood education they need (unique)

## SOAR Work PFC Board Meeting Summary

- Know the needs of the community

### *Strengthening Partnerships*

- A lot of successful networking.
- Communication between the agencies. Quarterly meeting between key agencies.
- The Leadership that this Partnership demonstrates at the state level. Being connected to the most current information on policies in the middle of the conversation.
- Intentional relationships with government, military, and statewide networks.
- Focus on filling service gaps and reducing duplication.
- Biggest piece is collaborative
- High-level – get other businesses to participate
- 

### *Programs*

- It seems like we are always ahead of the curve. The trailblazers. We'll pilot; We'll pivot.
- We have foresight.
- PFHE program support for students.
- Helped a lot of children with getting NC Pre-K. And helped the parents. Many assumptions are made that it will always be there.
- High-quality offerings: NC Pre-K, ECE recruitment/training, Family Connects, FTCC childcare support.
- Provide info about ongoing professional development – via emails, easily identified and disseminated
- (Sean) Opportunities for teachers and other staff with alternative dates for trainings. Cooperative.

# SOAR Work

## PFC Board Meeting Summary

### **Opportunities: What are our best future opportunities?**

1. What changes do we expect to see in the next 2-3 years?
2. What external forces or trends may impact our work?
3. What opportunities exist for us?
4. What are children/families, providers, board, staff, community, and others asking for?

### *Organizational Development*

- Cross-training in anticipation of senior leadership positions.
- Address staff retention and rethink structure.
- Building decision – less space- work from home – meeting space/some offices
- Diversify funding streams beyond government.
- Modernize systems for efficiency.
- Funding changes – types of funding, funder changes, new systems evolving with new opportunities.
- Continuing collaboration between CCS, PFC, and outside providers
- Asking CCS to open more NC Pre-K sites in the schools

### STRATEGIC PLAN FOCUS AREAS AND TIME HORIZON

The session focuses on "best future opportunities" across four strategic plan areas: organizational development, community engagement, strengthening partnerships, and program. Discussion targets expected changes over the next 2–3 years and aligning opportunities to those areas. The group will prioritize opportunities across the four areas, deferring detailed "results" work for later.

### FUNDING DIVERSIFICATION AND COMMS CAPACITY

Current reliance on government grants underscores diversifying into unrestricted philanthropic funding. Development and comms teams are understaffed; pursue low-lift, automation, and tools (including AI) to extend reach without overloading staff. Consider a multi-year campaign (e.g., 3-year) culminating in organizational milestones. Explore low-stakes, automated communication strategies tied to fundraising; build capacity with dedicated comms staffing.

### EXTERNAL TRENDS: FUNDING INSTABILITY AND INFORMATION INTEGRITY

Political instability threatens government funding; emphasizes need for unrestricted philanthropic revenue. Rise of AI increases mis- and disinformation risk; organizations must demystify, monitor trends, and proactively correct false narratives. Establish monitoring and response processes for information trends; proactively position thought leadership tailored to local context.

### *Community Engagement*

- Awareness of program offerings and resources generally, and working to reach non-traditional families
- Expand volunteer opportunities
- Increase grant-seeking efforts
- Concern about schools being consolidated and closed

## SOAR Work PFC Board Meeting Summary

- [Same with] child care providers closing due to lack of providers - workforce is not actively seeking early care and education
- Working with Dolly Parton accessing and focusing more on the teachers [Wanda Wesley]
- Outside providers to be more involved

### MILESTONE CAMPAIGN: ANNIVERSARY AND LEADERSHIP TRANSITION

Approaches include digital micro-donations ("5 instead of a coffee") and direct mail to broad contact lists (parents, program participants, partners, teachers). Avoid high-lift events (e.g., gala) due to bandwidth constraints. Campaign to honor Mary's leadership and celebrate an upcoming major anniversary (approaching 50 years). Proceed with concept development for an anniversary/retirement-aligned digital and direct mail campaign; specifics to be defined.

### COMMS RESOURCING AND TREND MONITORING

Need for a full-time comms role focused on research, trend tracking (hashtags, SEO, Google Alerts), and synthesizing data monthly. Shift from reactive to proactive thought leadership; contextualize national data to local community realities. Create a dedicated comms position with a defined cadence for monitoring and content strategy.

### *Strengthening Partnerships*

- Ministerial Alliance (empty Board slot)
- Form new collaborations (county expansion of Pre-K, faith-based partnerships).
- Strengthen ties with universities for education resources.
- More direct communication with teachers, same as Dolly Parton
- Strengthening some of these partnerships to determine better access to family resources:
  - Bus transportation
  - Health Department
  - Crown Coliseum
- Find what is best for the children by:
  - Ensuring resources are shared to get to the families
  - Ex: Incentive tickets to share with families at PFC

### *Programs*

- Expanding parent training programs for non-traditional parents (fathers, grandparents, etc.) without excluding traditional parents.
- Develop initiatives for special needs, food insecurity, homelessness, and mental health.
- Literacy programs to improve early reading outcomes.
- Need funds to secure ongoing funding
  - Critical technology growth
- Public informational forms, informational meetings to learn about NC Pre-K
- More visibility within the Community:
  - Partnering with libraries
  - Send Pediatricians flyers boldly stating who we serve

## SOAR Work PFC Board Meeting Summary

### EARLY INTERVENTION AND SYSTEM NAVIGATION

Emphasize early intervention before school entry; educate families on accessing child care, special education, and local gateways. Navigation complexity varies across states and military communities; adults also need updated guidance as systems evolve. Develop partnerships and materials mapping local pathways to services; target common touchpoints for outreach.

### Next Steps (Related to Opportunities)

- Draft concept for anniversary/leadership transition digital and direct mail campaign
- Define and post a full-time communications role with research and monitoring responsibilities
- Plan workplace giving campaign targeting corporate partners via LinkedIn
- Pilot Instagram content strategy focused on inspiration and community-building
- Implement Meta chatbot/FAQ automation to direct families to vetted resources (e.g., 2-1-1)
- Map and publish local service navigation guides for families, including military and newcomers

# SOAR Work

## PFC Board Meeting Summary

### **Aspirations: What do we care deeply about?**

#### *Organizational Development*

- Staff perspective
- Succession Planning (including Job Shadowing; Cross-training)
- Every child deserves a strong foundation.
- Increase ECE pay for retention and affordability for families.
- Expand educational partnerships (FTCC and beyond).
- Reduce child abuse and neglect.
- Raise literacy rates to improve long-term academic success.
- Establish a great gateway/foundation with early learning programs for all 4-year-olds
- Adequate early learning
- Cumberland Curriculum Partners
- Incentive – funding & supporting early learning with different “looks”
  - \$1,000/site Curriculum
  - \$500/site snacks
- Collaborative professional development system (CCS, HS, PFC, Private Sites, FCCH) due to inadequate funding if continues to be addressed separately
- Expand Pre-K to 3-year-olds

#### KPIS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

##### Key Focus Areas:

- KPIS
- Community Engagement
- Social Media

#### DEFINING SUCCESS METRICS: KPIS VS. VALUE DRIVERS

The group discussed how to measure success for their opportunities, clarifying the difference between Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and value drivers. KPIs are the measurable outputs or outcomes (e.g., number of families served). Value drivers are the underlying reasons that make an outcome worth pursuing. The group agreed to focus on defining KPIs for the opportunities already identified.

#### MEASURING IMPACT ON FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

A suggestion was made to start with baseline data, such as the current number of families supported. Data is currently captured for families served through anti-pre-K, consumer education, the lending library, and KPO groups. The group discussed setting goals to increase the number of families impacted within a specific timeframe, similar to SMART goals. A distinction was made between "reached" (a broad audience, including marketing and social media) and "served" (those receiving a direct service). It was agreed to track "number of children served" and "number of children reached" as separate metrics.

#### ALTERNATIVE METHODS FOR GATHERING FEEDBACK

Surveys were mentioned as a way to gather information, but their administrative burden was noted as

## SOAR Work PFC Board Meeting Summary

a significant drawback. As an alternative to staff-run surveys, it was suggested to partner with local higher education institutions (like FSU). Students in social work, psychology, or education could conduct and analyze surveys as part of a case study, internship, or for college credit. This approach would provide valuable data without burdening staff and would also build a talent pipeline.

### *Community Engagement*

- Better ways to engage families/community in Board activities – e.g., issues filling Board positions. Parent voice is hard to get. To get them regularly is hard. The people we often get are privileged and can find the time. The people who use the services, who are parents accessing our services, don't have the knowledge or capacity to engage that way. How can we reduce barriers to encourage participation?
- Collaborate with parents involved with school at the end of the school day, not just before 6pm
- Employers – future work for an experienced Community Engagement team.

### BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

The discussion shifted to measuring success in building an online community. Ideas for online community building included private Facebook or LinkedIn groups for parents and strategic partners, and an online forum, similar to Reddit, for parents in Cumberland County to ask questions and share insights. It was noted that a provider group already exists but has low engagement. To increase participation, it was suggested to empower active members to contribute content, as posts from staff can be perceived as just part of their job.

### STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING ONLINE GROUP ENGAGEMENT

The group discussed challenges in an existing provider group where activity became focused on posting available slots, which was not its intended purpose. To improve engagement, it was suggested to shift from one-way information dissemination to creating real value for members. Solicit feedback on members' biggest challenges and create curated content to address them. Use prompts and planned content to encourage interaction rather than posting "billboard" style announcements. Other ideas included hosting dynamic content like a monthly 30-minute live "hot seat" session for members to brainstorm solutions together.

### *Strengthening Partnerships*

- Workforce Development programming (salary increases and training for new teachers)
- Ask Pediatricians when diagnosed, direct parents to "Child Find" – Access to Early-In

### *Programs*

- DSS is not able to handle the need for children who need subsidized care. Not sure if FTCC can meet the need. Over 1800 on waitlist. Staffing is a big issue – can't process because of a lack of staff. (DSS)
- Could PFCCC reinstate internal subsidy program?
- More slots; more care (e.g. families with vouchers who cannot find care). Increasing accessibility and affordability of care).
- Consider expanding higher education access to subsidy.
- Workforce Development program (continue)

## SOAR Work PFC Board Meeting Summary

- Early Intervention
- Parent navigation skills and awareness of resources
- “Make it” take it night and other hands on learning routine events including parents

### EARLY INTERVENTION AND SYSTEM NAVIGATION

Emphasize early intervention before school entry; educate families on accessing child care, special education, and local gateways. Navigation complexity varies across states and military communities; adults also need updated guidance as systems evolve. Develop partnerships and materials mapping local pathways to services; target common touchpoints for outreach.

#### Next Steps (Overall for Aspirations):

- Define baselines for "children served" and "children reached" metrics
- Set specific, time-bound KPI targets for family and child impact
- Identify a lead to revitalize the provider social media group and outline an engagement plan
- Pilot interactive content (e.g., monthly 30-minute live "hot seat" session)
- Explore partnership opportunities with local universities (e.g., FSU) for survey design and execution; determine initial contacts and timeline

# SOAR Work

## PFC Board Meeting Summary

### **Results: How will we know if we are successful? MILEMARKERS**

1. Considering our strengths, opportunities, and aspirations, what meaningful measures will indicate we are on track with achieving our goals?
2. What measurable results do we want to see?
3. What resources are needed to implement our most vital projects and initiatives?

### *Organizational Development*

- Standard Operating Procedures
- Completed succession plans; Keeping them up to date
- Building in time to collaborate or making them goals in personal development plans
- Higher staff retention rates and satisfaction.
- Staff development and competitive compensation for ECE retention and cost reduction impact for families.
- Stronger grant-writing and fundraising capacity.
- Increase the number of students/children across Cumberland County who are prepared for kindergarten
- Kindergarten assessment – M Class vs NC Pre-K data – gains/strengths
- Reversion – seeing children with less behavioral issues
- Succession plans
- Cross-training

### *Community Engagement*

- Growth in community engagement (events, volunteer participation opportunities).
- Families:
  - At beginning of year, contact them
  - At the end of the contact year, assess again
  - Measuring results
- Standardized family assessment

### *Strengthening Partnerships*

- Expanded partnerships and diversified funding streams.
- Are we having more collaborations?
- Not silos and more holistic
- Goals:
  - Development
  - Training
  - Milestones

### *Programs*

- Slots are filled with NC Pre-K (At what percentage – 100% not always realistic)
- Increased NC Pre-K enrollment and literacy scores by 3rd grade.
- All families that need child care know where to come for assistance
- Funding for modernization and program expansion.

# **SOAR Board Summary Report Updated Strategic Framework**

This report reflects updated SOAR analysis outcomes and integrates revised Board input into a unified strategic framework aligned with Partnership for Children goal areas.

# **Strategic Pillars**

## **Sustainable & Adaptive Organization**

Strengthen organizational resilience through diversified funding, leadership succession, modernized systems, and staff retention.

## **Equitable Access & Early Intervention**

Ensure early, equitable access to high-quality early learning, intervention, and navigation support.

## **Strong Workforce, Strong Outcomes**

Invest in workforce compensation, development, and stability to improve child and family outcomes.

## **Authentic Community Voice & Engagement**

Create accessible, meaningful opportunities for families and communities to shape systems and decisions.

## **Connected Systems & Strategic Partnerships**

Reduce silos and maximize impact through intentional, cross-sector partnerships.

## **Strengths**

- Resilience and adaptability amid funding and system changes
- Experienced, mission-driven leadership and staff
- Strong community trust and long-standing presence
- Collaborative culture and cross-sector leadership
- Innovative, high-quality programs

## **Opportunities**

- Diversified and unrestricted funding growth
- Leadership transition and milestone campaigns
- Expanded outreach to underserved families
- Communications, technology, and systems modernization
- Workforce development and early intervention expansion

## **Aspirations**

- Universal access to quality early learning
- Workforce stability and fair compensation
- Improved literacy and prevention outcomes
- Authentic family engagement
- Clear metrics and accountability

## **Results & Milemarkers**

- Completed succession plans and SOPs
- Improved staff retention and satisfaction
- Kindergarten readiness and literacy gains
- Expanded partnerships and funding streams
- High utilization of early learning slots

SOAR Board Full Report  
AI Supported Review, with Goals, Strategic Objectives, KPI drafts for consideration

Revised main file. Please update full report using updated information.

The updated full SOAR report has been completed and reflects the **revised main file**, incorporating the updated language, priorities, and the 5 strategic pillars aligned to the Board's input.

### **Download the updated full report (PDF):**

SOAR Board Full Report – Updated Strategic Framework

### **What this version includes**

- Integrated **updated SOAR content** from the revised document
- Clear articulation of the **5 Strategic Pillars** as the organizing framework
- Condensed, Board-ready summaries of **Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results**
- Language aligned to **organizational development, community engagement, partnerships, and programs**

### **Next refinements (optional)**

I can further:

- Expand each pillar into **goal statements + 3–5 objectives**
- Add a **results/KPI table** tied to each pillar
- Reformat into a **final Board packet** (cover, table of contents, branding placeholders)
- Prepare a **funder-facing or community-facing version**

Just let me know how this will be used next and I'll tailor it accordingly.

Goal Statements and 3-5 objectives, with KPI table

Below is a **Board- and staff-ready strategic framework** that builds directly from the revised SOAR report and the 5 Strategic Pillars. Each pillar includes:

- **1 clear Goal Statement**
- **3–5 Strategic Objectives**
- **A KPI table** (with outcome-focused, measurable indicators)

This is written so it can drop directly into a **strategic plan, dashboard, or funding proposal**.

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# **Strategic Pillar 1: Sustainable & Adaptive Organization**

## Goal Statement

Ensure long-term organizational stability and adaptability through strong leadership, diversified funding, and efficient systems that support mission impact.

## Strategic Objectives

1. Strengthen leadership continuity through succession planning and cross-training.
2. Diversify revenue streams to reduce reliance on government funding.
3. Improve staff retention and satisfaction through competitive compensation and development.
4. Modernize systems and processes to increase efficiency and reduce administrative burden.
5. Build internal fundraising and communications capacity.

## Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Objective	KPI	Measurement
Leadership continuity	% of leadership roles with documented succession plans	Annual review
Funding diversification	% of unrestricted / non-government revenue	Annual financials
Workforce stability	Staff retention rate	Annual HR data
Operational efficiency	Staff time spent on administrative tasks	Staff survey
Fundraising capacity	Annual philanthropic revenue growth	Year-over-year

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# Strategic Pillar 2: Equitable Access & Early Intervention

## Goal Statement

Ensure all children and families—especially those most underserved—can access high-quality early learning and early intervention supports.

## Strategic Objectives

1. Expand access to NC Pre-K and other early learning opportunities.
2. Improve early identification and referral for developmental, behavioral, and learning needs.
3. Strengthen family navigation of child care, education, and support systems.

4. Increase awareness of available resources among non-traditional and underserved families.

### Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Objective	KPI	Measurement
Access to early learning	% of NC Pre-K slots filled	Program data
Early intervention	# of referrals to early intervention services	Partner reports
Family navigation	% of families reporting improved understanding of services	Family assessment
Awareness	# of children/families reached vs. served	Outreach tracking

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## Strategic Pillar 3: Strong Workforce, Strong Outcomes

### Goal Statement

Strengthen the early childhood workforce to improve program quality, access, and outcomes for children and families.

### Strategic Objectives

1. Increase workforce retention through compensation and support strategies.
2. Expand professional development and credentialing opportunities.
3. Build workforce pipelines through higher education and partner institutions.
4. Reduce provider closures related to staffing shortages.

### Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Objective	KPI	Measurement
Workforce retention	ECE turnover rate	Annual workforce data
Professional development	# of educators completing training/credentials	Program records
Workforce pipeline	# of students entering ECE pathways	Partner data
Provider stability	# of providers operating year over year	Licensing data

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# Strategic Pillar 4: Authentic Community Voice & Engagement

## Goal Statement

Create inclusive, accessible opportunities for families and communities to actively shape early childhood systems and decisions.

## Strategic Objectives

1. Reduce barriers to family participation in engagement and governance activities.
2. Elevate parent voice, especially from families using services.
3. Strengthen community-building through digital and in-person engagement.
4. Improve feedback mechanisms without overburdening families or staff.

## Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Objective	KPI	Measurement
Family participation	% of engaged families from priority populations	Engagement data
Parent voice	# of parents involved in advisory or feedback roles	Annual count
Community engagement	Engagement rate in online groups/events	Platform analytics
Feedback quality	% of programs using standardized family assessment	Program review

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# Strategic Pillar 5: Connected Systems & Strategic Partnerships

## Goal Statement

Strengthen cross-sector collaboration to reduce silos, maximize resources, and improve outcomes for children and families.

## Strategic Objectives

1. Expand and deepen strategic partnerships across education, health, faith, and business sectors.
2. Improve coordination and referral pathways among partners.
3. Leverage partnerships to increase funding, workforce capacity, and service reach.

4. Align partners around shared goals and measurable outcomes.

## Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Objective	KPI	Measurement
Partnership growth	# of active strategic partnerships	Annual inventory
System coordination	# of shared initiatives or referral agreements	Partner reports
Resource leverage	\$ leveraged through partnerships	Financial tracking
Collaboration quality	Partner satisfaction score	Annual partner survey

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## Next Steps

- Create a **staff & board-facing implementation matrix** (who owns what, by when)
  - ❖ Work on this through Leadership meetings, Department meetings, All Staff meetings and Board & Executive Committee, Board committees
- Convert this into a **Board-approved Strategic Plan section**
- Build a **1–2 page KPI dashboard** aligned to these tables
- Prepare a **funder-facing logic model** mapped to these goals