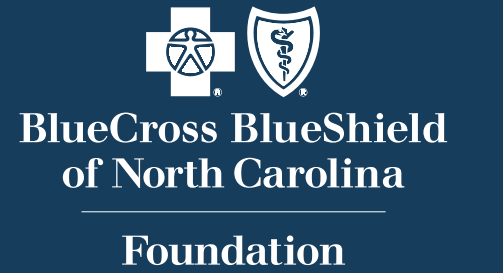


# Early Childhood

**Our goal:** every young child (ages 0-5) has the opportunity and resources to be healthy and well-prepared for success in school, work, and life.



To ensure every young child has the opportunity and resources to thrive, we must create a strong foundation from which all children can grow. This includes accessible, affordable, high quality child care. It is essential that we invest in solutions to address the challenges facing North Carolina’s early care and education system, which include a lack of access, barriers to home-based care, low wages for the sector’s workforce, and disparities in exclusionary discipline practices, among others.

## Signals in the Field



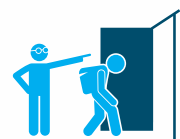
The General Assembly approved a \$43 million recurring increase to the child care subsidy reimbursement rate, bringing them closer to reflecting the actual costs of high quality care. Legislation was also passed to reassess how “high-quality” is defined in child care settings.



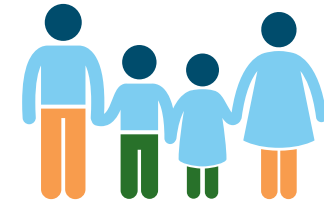
The average cost of child care remains prohibitively expensive for most families. Recent data show that the average annual cost of child care in North Carolina ranges from \$7,592-\$9,255 for children birth to age four. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, child care is considered affordable if it costs no more than 7% of a family’s income. By this standard, only 12.4% of North Carolina families can afford child care.



The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services released three early childhood public service announcements (PSAs) as part of the [Raise NC campaign](#). The PSAs aim to highlight the importance of early childhood educators and their contributions to the state.



Data collected in five counties through a collaboration between UNC and local Smart Start agencies shows that racial disparities in early childhood suspensions and expulsions track with national data. For instance, Black boys are 2.5 times more likely to be suspended or expelled than their white peers, which is consistent with national data sets.



## Current Focus

At the present time, we are focused on transforming the early care and education system in North Carolina so that it meets the needs of all children and families.

## Strategies & Updates



**Support the development of a broad coalition working toward an early childhood system that benefits all.**

- The Care and Learning Coalition completed a statewide listening tour of 33 counties focused on barriers and facilitators to child care from the perspective of parents and providers. This feedback will inform the development of a shared policy agenda.
- Grantee, the Hunt Institute gathered state and local officials from across the nation, including several North Carolina representatives, for a leadership summit focused on building bipartisan policy recommendations to improve access to early care and education in the state.
- A recent survey of grantees engaged in advocacy and systems change work revealed a “relatively high ability” to engage in activities to advocate for and support their communities. Grantees are also increasingly leveraging cohort cross-learning to identify opportunities to incorporate advocacy approaches.



**Identify and support work to address racial inequities in preschool suspensions, expulsions, and other exclusionary practices.**

- Community listening sessions were completed across eight counties, which will inform a communications initiative focused on addressing early childhood education suspensions, expulsions, and other exclusionary practices.



**Identify and support work to strengthen the early care and education workforce particularly as it relates to home-based care.**

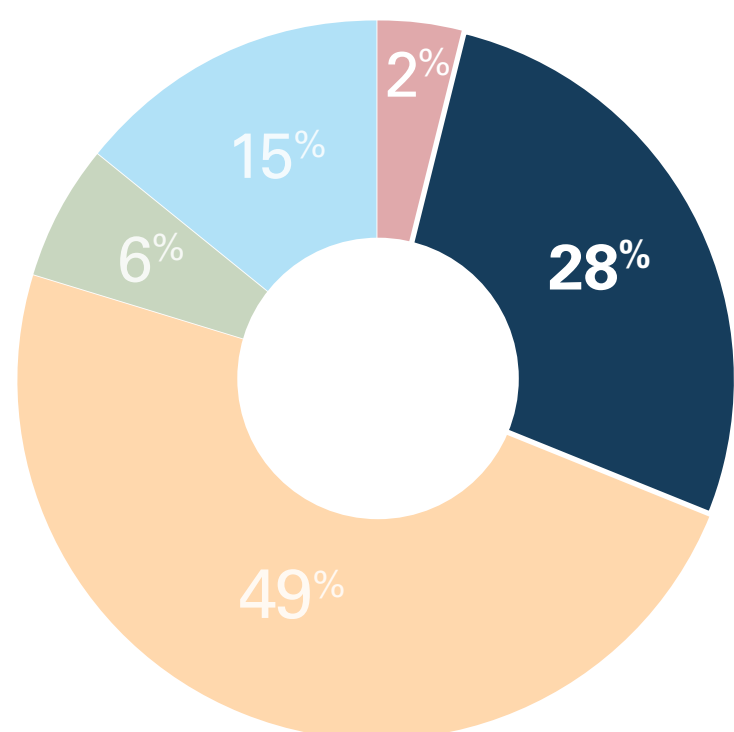
- Grantees representing four home-based child care networks took part in an intensive six-month planning period with support from national experts at Home Grown. The plans they developed will support increased participation by providers in their networks to inform the professional, business, and advocacy support they offer to home-based providers. Each network will be funded at \$100,000 per year through 2025 for implementation and will join previous grantees to participate in a learning community.

## Grantmaking Data



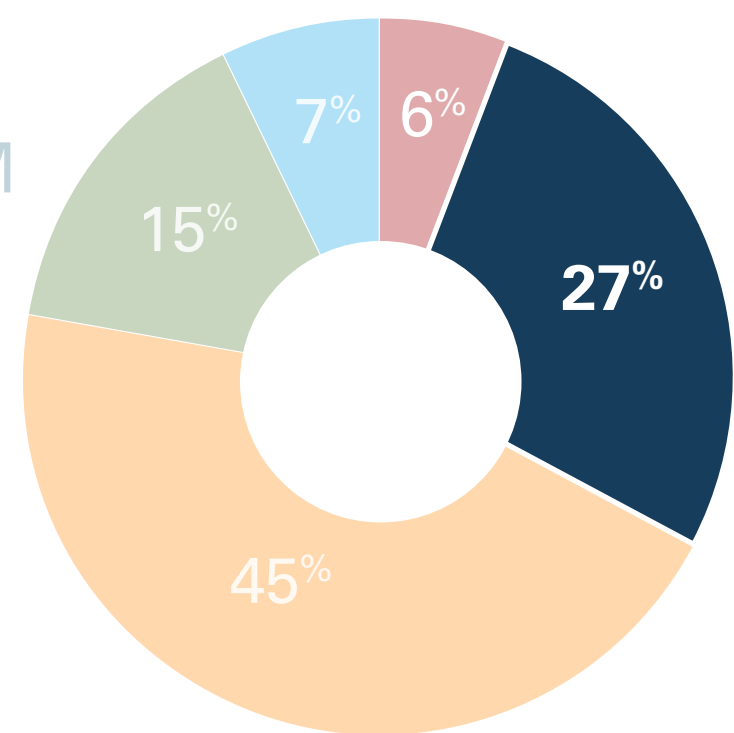
### CURRENT ACTIVE GRANTS

- Health Care Workforce: 4
- Early Childhood: 47
- Healthy Communities: 82
- Healthy Food: 9
- Oral Health: 25



### CURRENT \$ AMOUNT OF ACTIVE GRANTS

- Health Care Workforce: \$3.8M
- Early Childhood: \$16.8M
- Healthy Communities: \$27.8M
- Healthy Food: \$9.4M
- Oral Health: \$4M

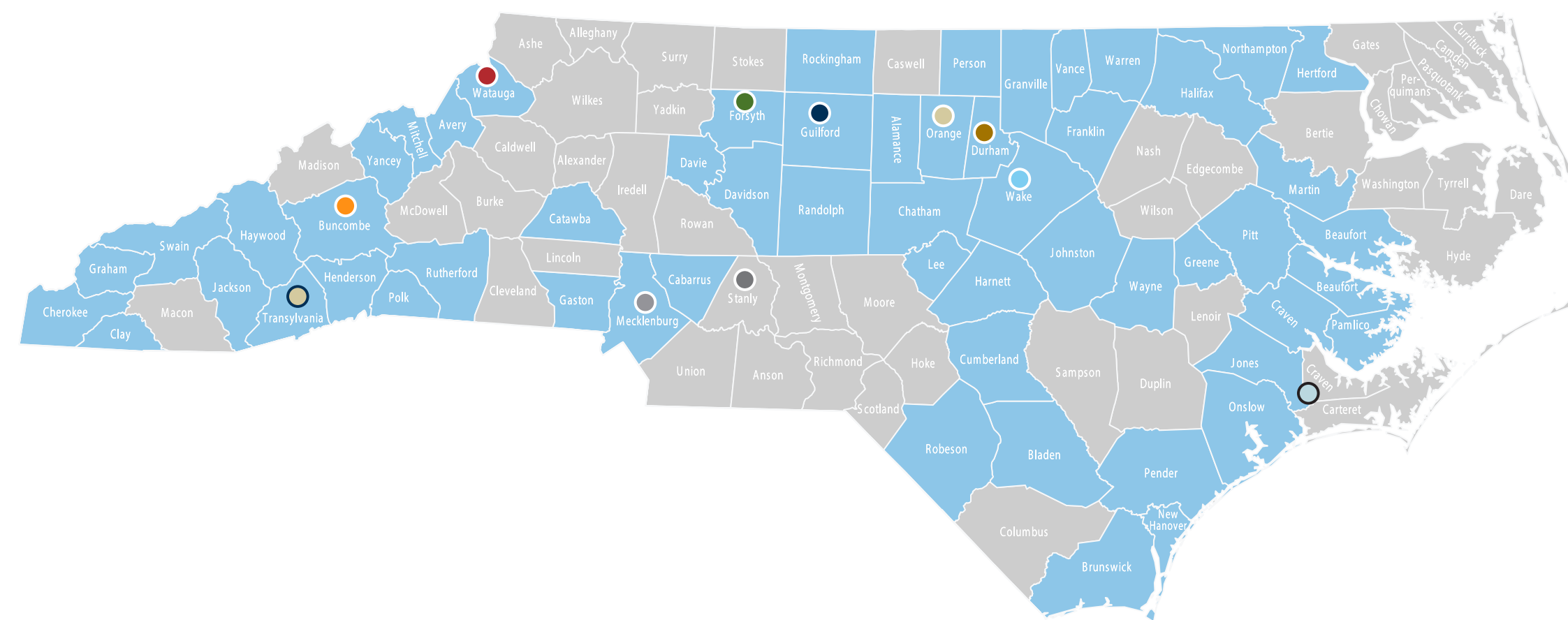


### Active Grants by Geographic Area

#### Location of Grantee

- Buncombe 3
- Craven 1
- Durham 12
- Forsyth 2
- Guilford 2
- Mecklenburg 8
- Orange 5
- Stanly 1
- Transylvania 1
- Wake 11
- Watauga 1

**Statewide 25**



Counties impacted by local and regional grants

### Grants Approved by Fiscal Year: Three-Year Snapshot

Fiscal Year	Number of Grants Approved	Dollars Invested
FY 21 - 22	10	\$2,290,000
FY 22 - 22	19	\$4,000,000
FY 23 - 24 YTD	2	\$80,000

## Looking Ahead

STRATEGY	WHAT TO EXPECT IN FY 23-24
<p><b>Support the development of a broad coalition working toward an early childhood system that benefits all.</b></p>	<p><b>Increase alignment between state and local advocates</b>, including parents and providers, to pursue long-term policy and practice changes needed to promote availability, affordability, and equity in early care and education through funding opportunities and implementation of capacity building support.</p> <p><b>Deepen the capacity</b> of community-based organizations engaged in advocacy to promote accessible, affordable, and high-quality early care and education by providing targeted supports as identified in previous evaluation activities.</p>
IMPLEMENTATION METRIC	TIMEFRAME
Enhanced capacity of grassroots organizations to engage in advocacy and systems change work on early care and education issues.	JUNE 2024
Support a wide spectrum of stakeholders in identifying shared priorities and strategies for early childhood education transformation.	DECEMBER 2024

STRATEGY	WHAT TO EXPECT IN FY 23-24
<p><b>Identify and support work to address racial inequities in preschool suspensions, expulsions, and other exclusionary practices.</b></p>	<p><b>Continue to support and learn from promising models to address exclusionary discipline</b> through a partnership with a third-party evaluation firm.</p> <p><b>Continue comprehensive communications effort to build public will</b> to eliminate exclusionary practices in early child care and education.</p> <p><b>Develop a comprehensive strategy</b> through a Foundation-supported coalition to advance policy and practice change based on learnings from the field.</p>
IMPLEMENTATION METRIC	TIMEFRAME
Increased engagement of parent and caregiver-leaders who are advocating for solutions to early care and education suspensions, expulsions, and other exclusionary practices.	DECEMBER 2024
Identification of elements of promising models to address the causes and conditions that lead to early care and education suspensions, expulsions, and other exclusionary practices.	AUGUST 2025

STRATEGY	WHAT TO EXPECT IN FY 23-24
<p><b>Identify and support work to strengthen the early care and education workforce particularly as it relates to home-based care.</b></p>	<p><b>Implement new approaches to support home-based child care grantees</b>, including a peer learning community.</p> <p><b>Implement a leadership development program</b> for home-based child care providers.</p> <p><b>Capture learnings about effective practices for supporting and expanding home-based child care</b> through the partnership of an evaluation firm.</p>
IMPLEMENTATION METRIC	TIMEFRAME
Enhanced capacity of local home-based child care networks to support provider networks.	JUNE 2026
Identification of strategies to enhance sustainability and quality in home-based child care.	JUNE 2026