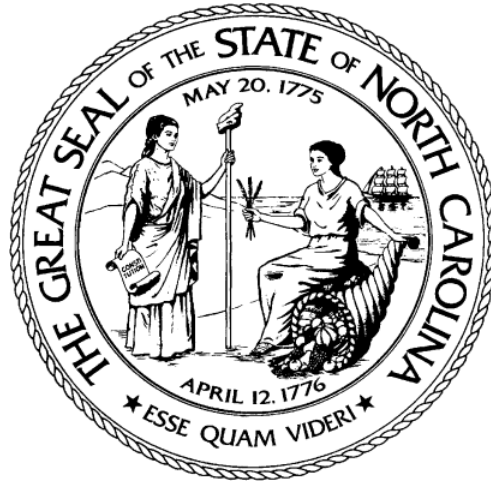


**Annual NC Pre-K Report  
State Fiscal Year 2024-2025**

**Session Law 2023-134, Section 9D.1.(f)  
NC General Statute 143B-168.10A**



**Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations**

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

**House Appropriations on Health and Human Services**

**Senate Appropriations on Health and Human Services**

**Office of State Budget and Management**

**Fiscal Research Division**

**By**

**North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services**

**April 1, 2026**

## **Reporting Requirements**

Session Law 2023-134, Section 9D.1.(f) requires the Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) to submit an annual report no later than March 15 of each year to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services, the Office of State Budget and Management, and the Fiscal Research Division. The report shall include the following:

- (1) The number of children participating in the NC Pre-K Program by county.
- (2) The number of children participating in the NC Pre-K Program who have never been served in other early education programs such as childcare, public or private preschool, Head Start, Early Head Start, or early intervention programs.
- (3) The expected NC Pre-K expenditures for the programs and the source of the local contributions.
- (4) The results of an annual evaluation of the NC Pre-K Program.

**(1) The number of children participating in the NC Pre-K Program by county**

In Program Year 2024-2025 (July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025), there were a total of 30,022 children participating in NC Pre-K programs. The table below shows the distribution by county.

**Number and Percent of Children Served by NC Pre-K by County (2024-2025)**

County	Number	Percent	County	Number	Percent	County	Number	Percent	County	Number	Percent
Alamance	511	1.70	Cumberland	1,506	5.02	Johnston	379	1.26	Randolph	401	1.34
Alexander	70	0.23	Currituck	49	0.16	Jones	48	0.16	Richmond	231	0.77
Alleghany	73	0.24	Dare	141	0.47	Lee	329	1.10	Robeson	673	2.24
Anson	144	0.48	Davidson	341	1.14	Lenoir	157	0.52	Rockingham	270	0.90
Ashe	113	0.38	Davie	174	0.58	Lincoln	297	0.99	Rowan	352	1.17
Avery	60	0.20	Duplin	352	1.17	Macon	122	0.41	Rutherford	278	0.93
Beaufort	131	0.44	Durham	599	2.00	Madison	21	0.07	Sampson	352	1.17
Bertie	93	0.31	Edgecombe	268	0.89	Martin	96	0.32	Scotland	295	0.98
Bladen	193	0.64	Forsyth	758	2.52	McDowell	236	0.79	Stanly	261	0.87
Brunswick	261	0.87	Franklin	171	0.57	Mecklenburg	1,726	5.75	Stokes	147	0.49
Buncombe	442	1.47	Gaston	822	2.74	Mitchell	23	0.08	Surry	264	0.88
Burke	410	1.37	Gates	42	0.14	Montgomery	204	0.68	Swain	123	0.41
Cabarrus	377	1.26	Graham	47	0.16	Moore	61	0.20	Transylvania	48	0.16
Caldwell	302	1.01	Granville	152	0.51	Nash	320	1.07	Tyrrell	19	0.06
Camden	38	0.13	Greene	106	0.35	New Hanover	588	1.96	Union	388	1.29
Carteret	228	0.76	Guilford	2,384	7.94	Northampton	76	0.25	Vance	261	0.87
Caswell	72	0.24	Halifax	254	0.85	Onslow	735	2.45	Wake	1,702	5.67
Catawba	440	1.47	Harnett	386	1.29	Orange	274	0.91	Warren	71	0.24
Chatham	227	0.76	Haywood	140	0.47	Pamlico	53	0.18	Washington	60	0.20
Cherokee	75	0.25	Henderson	205	0.68	Pasquotank	173	0.58	Watauga	92	0.31
Chowan	93	0.31	Hertford	134	0.45	Pender	315	1.05	Wayne	614	2.05
Clay	44	0.15	Hoke	315	1.05	Perquimans	37	0.12	Wilkes	352	1.17
Cleveland	518	1.73	Hyde	17	0.06	Person	141	0.47	Wilson	168	0.56
Columbus	324	1.08	Iredell	357	1.19	Pitt	590	1.97	Yadkin	152	0.51
Craven	289	0.96	Jackson	76	0.25	Polk	86	0.29	Yancey	37	0.12
									<b>Total</b>	<b>30,022</b>	<b>100.80</b>

Note: Percentages are rounded to two decimal places. So, total percentage may exceed 100%

**(2) The number of children participating in the NC Pre-K Program who have never been served in other early education programs such as childcare, public or private preschool, Head Start, Early Head Start, or early intervention programs.**

Of the 30,022 children participating in a NC Pre-K in Program Year 2024-2025, 16,989 (56.7%) were never previously served in other early education programs.

**(3) The NC Pre-K expenditures for the programs and the source of local contribution:**

The SFY 2024-2025 average funds allocated for NC Pre-K Districts by source are listed below. Dollar values for in-kind resources are not included.

	<b>SFY 2024-2025</b>
Total direct service funds allocated	\$ 173,309,730
Title I resources	\$ 152,213,305
Smart Start resources	\$ 94,858,267
CACFP resources	\$ 56,891,671
City county resources	\$ 40,332,831
Head Start resources	\$ 22,596,955
Preschool Disability resources	\$ 11,358,593
Private provider resources	\$ 5,109,647
Subsidy resources	\$ 3,125,920

The source of local contributions as certified and reported by NC Pre-K contractors from July 1, 2024 through November 30, 2024 (part year) are noted in the chart below. Certification of expenditures of other resources in each NC Pre-K Program through November 30 is an annual reporting requirement. Certified Other Resources are reported to DCDEE by local contractors each year and should represent up to five (5) months of actual expenditures. These expenditures listed by funding source represent the amount of cash – not in-kind contributions – that has been spent during this time period from other sources to support the NC Pre-K Program. NC Pre-K subcontractors serve children for ten months. If a similar amount of funds were expended for the remaining five months of services, a total of approximately \$126 million of other resources may be expended.

<b>Certified Other Resources</b>	<b>Expenditures Reported through 11/30/24</b>
Head Start	\$ 16,763,145
Title I	\$ 13,819,073
Preschool Disabilities Program	\$ 8,256,633
Other	\$ 6,520,143
Child and Adult Care Food Program	\$ 5,295,660
Smart Start	\$ 5,093,103
Local Appropriations	\$ 4,064,879
Private Providers	\$3,278,493
<b>Total (Five months)</b>	<b>\$ 63,091,129</b>

#### **(4) The Results of the Annual Evaluation of the NC Pre-K Program<sup>1</sup>**

The Division of Child Development and Early Education contracts with Center for Urban Affairs & Community Services at NC State University to conduct an annual evaluation of the NC Pre-K Program. Program evaluation was completed using administrative and descriptive data from three main NC Pre-K databases. Findings from the evaluation are presented below. For SFY 2024-2025, the NC Pre-K Program served 30,022 children in 2,082 classrooms.

- More than half of NC Pre-K classrooms (about 52.8%) were in public school settings, about one-third (33.9%) were in private settings, and the remaining (13.3%) were in Head Start.
- Average class size was 17.8 children. Children attended an average of 132 days, representing 79% of the average days of operation (166) or 73% of the 180 intended days of operation<sup>2</sup>.
- Characteristics for children enrolled in NC Pre-K programs:
  - There were approximately equal proportions of boys and girls. About 49.8% (14,953) of the enrolled children were male, and 50.2% (15,069) were female.
  - The largest racial group was White or European-American (53% or 15,919), followed by Black or African-American (45.5% or 13,647). Smaller proportions of children were identified as Native American or Alaskan Native (5.8% or 1,727), Asian (3.8% or 1,015), and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (0.9% or 283). About 8% (2,385) of children selected multiple races. Since multiple race selections were permitted, total percentage exceeds 100%. Nearly a quarter (24% or 7,325) children identified as Latinx ethnicity.
  - About 78% (23,422) of the children attending NC Pre-K had at least one parent in the workforce.
  - Children served by the NC Pre-K Program primarily came from low-income families, with 78.6% (23,600) eligible for free or reduced-price lunch
  - For other eligibility factors, 16.8% (5,057) of children participating were identified as having limited English proficiency. Approximately 6% (1,697) of enrolled children had identified educational needs. About 9% (2,789) of children were reported as having been screened and evaluated for developmental disabilities. Fewer than 3% (730) of children were diagnosed with chronic health conditions. Additionally, about 5% (1,378) of children were from military families.
  - Information on children's prior placement indicated that over half (56.5% or 16,989) had never previously been served in any preschool setting and an additional 13.4% (4,042) were unserved at the time of enrollment.
- For the NC star-rated licenses (the Quality Rating and Improvement System or QRIS in NC), approximately 80% of the sites had a five-star rating and 17% had a four-star rating.
- About 93% of classrooms reported using Creative Curriculum and its companion

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<sup>1</sup> Gregory, C, Sharma Gautam, D, O'Neal R, and Brannon, Y (2026). North Carolina Pre-Kindergarten Program Evaluation 2024-2025. Center for Urban Affairs and Community Services, NC State University

<sup>2</sup> Program requirements allow providers greater flexibility to implement instructional calendars that best meet the needs of their program while still maintaining minimum expectations for the amount of services provided to children. Sites meet a minimum number of 1,170 service hours (180 days x 6.5 hours) rather than holding them to a specific number of weeks or days. Accordingly, it's entirely possible for a program that provides NC Pre-K for a 7 hour day (instead of 6.5 hours) to only have 167 operational days in our system (1,170 hours/7 hours)

assessment (Teaching Strategies Gold or the Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum). All classrooms reported using an approved developmental screening tool.

- Over 95% of the lead teachers in the NC Pre-K Program in 2024-2025 had at least a bachelor's degree or higher in both public school and private settings. About 98% of the lead teachers in public setting and about 90% in private setting had at least a bachelor's degree. Very few teachers reported having only a High School Diploma or GED. All lead teachers in public setting reported their education level while about 4% of private teachers did not report<sup>3</sup>.
- About 95% of the lead teachers in the NC Pre-K Program had a Birth-Kindergarten (B-K) license. Less than 4% of lead teachers in public setting, and about 6% in private setting reported some other kinds of license or credentials. Less than 1% of the lead teachers in both settings reported no licensure/credentials<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Not reported

<sup>4</sup> Not reported; represents teachers who may still be completing required coursework or finalizing documentation