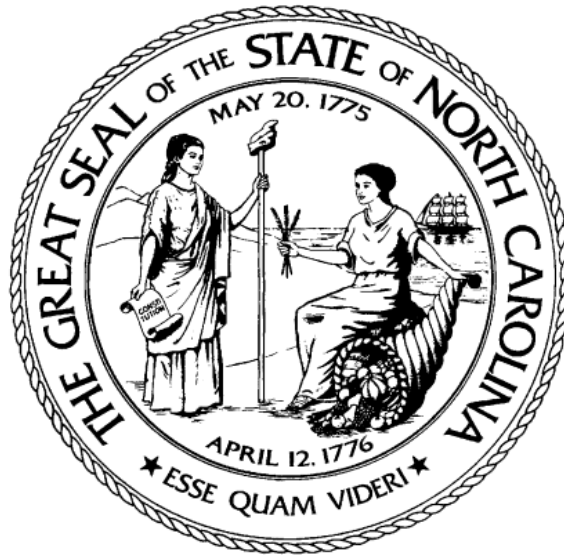


**North Carolina Children's Trust Fund Expenditures
State Fiscal Year 2023-2024**

N.C.G.S. § 7B-1301-1302



Report to

**The Joint Legislative Commission on
Governmental Operations**

by

NC Department of Health and Human Services

May 1, 2025

Introduction

Pursuant to N.C.G.S. §7B-1302(b), the NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) shall report revenues and expenditures of the Children's Trust Fund to the Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations. DHHS, through the Division of Social Services (DSS), provides the staff and support services for implementing the Children's Trust Fund in accordance with N.C.G.S. § 7B-1301 and offers this report on the Fund's revenues and expenditures for State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2023-2024.

SFY 2023-2024 Children's Trust Fund Activities

The North Carolina Children's Trust Fund programming supports cross-agency collaborative, community-based initiatives to provide outreach, support, and services to individuals and families identified as being at-risk of compromised health and safety. They strive to eliminate or reduce those risks by promoting protective factors that strengthen and support families.

In SFY 2023-2024, North Carolina Children's Trust Program Services supported eight community-based agencies to provide Respite programs, which is a short-term service provided in the temporary absence of the regular caregiver to children who are at risk of victimization, who have experienced victimization, and/or who have disabilities, chronic or terminal illness. This service is provided within or outside the child's home and is intended to enable the family to stay together and to keep the child(ren) living at home and in the community.

These voluntary, free services helped increase the capacity of parents and caregivers to care for their children, helped children develop healthy coping mechanisms, improved caregiver-child relationships, and reduced family stress. In addition, these eight Children's Trust Fund Programs demonstrated collaborative relationships with community partners and meaningful family engagement.

Children's Trust Fund Programs were required to meet the following requirements:

1. Provide voluntary services based on the Principles of Family Support Practice.
2. Demonstrate a commitment to meaningful parent engagement and leadership opportunities.
3. Provide prevention services that target populations most at risk of child abuse or neglect.
4. Promote the five protective factors linked to lower incidence of child abuse and neglect.
5. Describe emerging evidence that demonstrates respite services' positive impact on children and their families in their application.
6. Use evaluation tools to demonstrate positive outcomes for children and families.

In SFY 2023-2024, DSS obligated \$328,568 in NC Children's Trust Fund dollars in addition to a 25% agency match of \$108,881 to support the following eight community-based agencies. The eight agencies listed in this report were funded with the NC Children's Trust Fund through a competitive Request for Applications (RFA) process starting in SFY 2021-2022 as part of a 3-year grant cycle with a two-year extension.

Caring for Children - Buncombe County

Caring for Children has provided respite services to children and their families for 16 years to build behavioral and developmental skills, reduce out-of-home placements, and strengthen families. The Respite Scholarship program offers a voucher-based program, where qualified families can select their own respite provider. Caring for Children served 93 parents/caregivers and 181 children in SFY 2023-2024.

The Children's Center of Surry-Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Stokes, Surry, Wilkes and Yadkin Counties

The Children's Center of Surry has provided group foster care since 1998 and respite services to children and their families since 2009. The Children's Center of Surry provides respite services to families in Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Stokes, Surry, Wilkes and Yadkin and surrounding Northwest NC Counties. The respite services include two options 1) a voucher-based program where respite scholarships are provided to qualifying families to pay for a respite provider they select, or 2) Quarterly age-appropriate group activities provided by the Children's Center staff. Children's Center of Surry served 42 parents/caregivers and 68 children in SFY 2023-2024.

Coastal Horizons Center - New Hanover County

Coastal Horizons Center offers child, adolescent, and family services to Southeastern North Carolina. Since 1972, the agency's Open House Emergency Youth Shelter & Residential Services has provided shelter and respite services for youth ages 6-18 who are at risk of or have experienced child abuse or neglect. Coastal Horizons Center served 19 parents/caregivers and 34 children in SFY 2023-2024.

Exchange Club /SCAN – Alamance and Orange Counties

The Exchange Club's Family Center in Alamance County is a non-profit agency that was founded in 1997. The mission of the agency is the prevention of child abuse and neglect, and Respite services are a natural fit for the continuum of prevention services offered at the agency. These Respite services in Alamance and Orange counties help lower financial costs by providing free parenting education, decrease children in foster care, and prevent both new and reoccurring incidents of maltreatment. The Exchange Family Center served 27 parents/caregivers and 41 children in SFY 2023-2024.

Parenting Path (Exchange Club) – Alamance and Forsyth Counties

Exchange Club Center for the Prevention of Child Abuse of North Carolina (Parenting PATH) was founded in 1981 and provided respite services to families at risk of abuse or neglect due to poverty, domestic violence, or young children under 5 years old. Parenting PATH provides short term respite placements for children, age birth through 17, including those with emotional or physical disabilities in Alamance and Forsyth counties. In particular, the agency focuses on families who are experiencing stress, crisis, or illness. Parenting Path served 37 parents/caregivers and 53 children in SFY 2023-2024.

Wake County Human Services - Wake County

Since the early 1990s, the Family Services Program at Wake County Human Services has provided child abuse and neglect prevention services to children and their families. In 2008, the program launched its first Kinship Care support group which provided respite for the caregivers and education programming for the children and youth. The Family Services Program specifically targets children in Wake County from birth through 18 years and their caregivers to reduce the risk of abuse and/or

neglect. These services include information, linkage and referral; monthly respite support groups with child/youth educational programming; overnight youth “Lock-In”; weekend respite youth groups; and case management. Wake County Human Services served 60 parents/caregivers and 75 children in SFY 2023-2024.

Wayne Uplift Resource Association, Wayne County

Since 2007, Wayne Uplift Resource Association, Inc. has provided respite services to children and their families in Wayne County through Parents Anonymous® Empowerment Program. These services include weekly, 2-hour parent-led support sessions using the Parents Anonymous® model offered to caregivers who are domestic violence victims, weekly 2-hour group sessions for children utilizing the Parents Anonymous® Children curriculum offered to dependent children of domestic violence victims, and resources/referral services. Wayne Uplift Resource Association served 28 parents/caregivers and 36 children in SFY 2023-2024.

Youth Focus Inc., Guilford County

Since 1981, Youth Focus Inc. has provided respite services to children and their families. The Act Together Crisis Care program specifically targets children in Guilford County from age 10 through 17 years and their caregivers to reduce the risk of child maltreatment. Act Together is a 12-bed facility for youth who have run away, are experiencing a family crisis, are the victims of abuse or neglect, or become homeless for other reasons. The maximum stay is 21 days. Youth Focus served 29 parents/caregivers and 29 children in SFY 2023-2024.

Children’s Trust Fund Fiscal Data

SFY 2023-2024 Revenues

In SFY 2023-2024, a total of \$492,181 in revenue was generated for the North Carolina Children’s Trust Fund. Of this total:

- \$367,967 was received from marriage license fees
- \$15,333 was received from the special license plate fees (Kids First)
- \$108,881 was provided from required contractor match

SFY 2023-2024 Expenditures

In SFY 2023-2024, a total of \$437,449 was expended through eight community-based agencies to deliver child abuse and neglect prevention programming. Of this total:

- \$328,568 was expended through NC Children’s Trust Funds
- \$108,881 was expended through provider match

American Rescue Plan Act Funds

In November 2021, the Governor’s American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) budget was ratified as part of Session Law 2021-180 to support families, protect children’s safety, and promote healthy development. During SFY 2023-2024, federal ARPA funds in the amount of \$35,611 supplemented DSS Respite programs to provide emergency relief and concrete support such as food, diapers, housing, utilities, transportation, and education to 173 families.