

June 19, 2019



Why NC Pre-K Contractors are Not Requesting Additional Funding to Expand NC Pre-K in 2019-20

31/91 (34%) of NC Pre-K Contractors (34/100 counties) did not request additional funding for the 19/20 SFY.

Alexander

Anson

Ashe

Avery

Beaufort

Bertie

Cumberland

Currituck

Downeast-Nash/Edgecombe

Franklin

Halifax-Warren

Hertford

Hoke

Hyde

Lee

Lenoir-Greene

Mitchell

Northampton

Onslow

Pamlico

Perquimans

Person

Richmond

Robeson

Rowan

Stokes

Wake

Washington

Watauga

Wilkes

Yadkin

Reasons provided for not requesting additional funding.

Insufficient Funding

- 7-insufficient funding to administer program
- 9-no funding for new classroom set-up
- 9-no local dollars to supplement state funding

Insufficient Site Capacity

- 2-insufficient classroom/site capacity
 - 2-no child care centers that have available classrooms
 - 3-available child care centers, but they do not meet 4/5 star requirements
- 4-5 Star requirements that are difficult to meet:
- The one three-star center interested in NC Pre-k has been unable to proceed with their rated license assessment due to a high level of staff turnover.
 - Enhanced space and/or enhanced ratios
 - Some centers choose not to go through the ERS assessment because they feel they won't do well.
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 - Education
- 5-available 4/5 star centers but they do not have ability/interest meeting NC Pre-K Requirements

NC Pre-K requirements that are difficult to meet:

- The other eligible 4/5 star centers do not want to have to meet the requirements of the higher pay scale for NC Pre-k teachers. They feel it would create divisiveness in their staff and generate a morale problem.
 - 2-Teacher Qualifications
 - 2-Offering salary and benefits commensurate to the public schools
 - Not wanting to offer planning time
 - Release time for teachers to work on their professional development and licensure requirements
 - Exclusion of religious activities
 - Transition
 - serving children with unique needs
 - administrator requirements
 - General compliance
 - Recruiting/retaining qualified staff
 - new administration who are not ready to take on NC Pre-K classroom
- 2-sites in county closed or are closing
 - 5-lack of interest from local site providers
 - 3-decrease in sites that meet site selection criteria

Lack of Teachers

- 4-inability to locate qualified teachers
 - 1-teachers are not applying
 - 1-teachers are applying but not qualified
 - 2-teachers are applying and qualified but will not accept positions with salary and requirements
 - 3-teachers accept positions but leave for positions elsewhere

- 2-inability to locate qualified teacher assistants
- 5-inability to pay qualified teachers

No Children on Waitlist

- 15-no children on waiting list
 - 7-All eligible children are applying
 - 4-Shift in demographics-Number of eligible children has decreased
 - 3- Limited administrative funds make outreach difficult
 - 10-outreach is occurring but all eligible children are not applying

Reasons given for why eligible children are not applying

- We think that if we had staffing levels to allow for someone to just focus on outreach that we would be able to reach more children. Looking at our demographics there is a small population of 4-year-olds that are not in Head Start, NC Pre-k, Licensed Child Care, Family Child Care Homes, or unlicensed Preschools in the county.
- Mothers and grandparents are choosing to keep children at home one more year.
- Inability to guarantee a child will be placed in the site of choice. If a family has multiple children in childcare, they want them all at the same site.
- 5-There would be a waiting list if transportation could be provided at the current sites.
- Families choosing other options that work better for the parents and their child.
- Procrastination to the point that an application is never submitted.
- 2-Complications due to needing wrap-around services. Not all sites have wrap-around services and families are responsible for the cost of wrap-around care. Current program model does not meet the needs of parents who require a full day/full year program.
- We are not able to maintain a functional waitlist - once all slots have been filled and school has begun it is rare that a parent on the waiting list will accept a slot when it is offered to them. We have better luck in the fall/early winter but by end of January slots that go vacant tend to stay vacant. Parents do not want to disrupt their child from their current care situation and many parents do not want to enroll their child when they know the program will be ending in a few months.
- Despite outreach efforts, a lot of times parents think that they may not be eligible so they don't apply at all.
- Some families are reluctant to participate in public programs due to being undocumented.
- Some families have voiced concerns to other outreach agencies that if they sent their children to preschool or Head Start that they will be found to be illegally here and turned in even though they have been reassured that we do not function in that capacity at all.
- We are having difficulty getting Spanish speaking applicants, and we wonder if that is related to the difficult governmental climate and the fact that they are scared to apply. However, we don't know for sure if this is the case.
- Lack of transportation and convenient access to sites. There are no sites in outlying rural areas of the county. Physical space may be available but not enough eligible children in those areas to support full classrooms.

- Some families are opting to keep their children at home because they voice to us that they feel their children are too young to come to school 5 days per week and it would be too hard on them.
- Some families may not know about our program because they aren't in the places that we advertise or do not have a telephone to get calling messages or do not open the door to strangers when door to door visits are made

Transportation

- 5-lack of transportation
 - 5- No funds to pay total cost for transportation
 - 1- It is too costly to use public school buses
 - 2- The public schools will not allow NC Pre-K children to use their buses
 - 4- Private sites do not have vans/buses to provide transportation
 - 4- Geographic location of children in relation to the sites makes transportation too costly

Other reasons provided for why not requesting additional funds:

- Right now, there has been a decline in the number of children that are on the waiting list in Beaufort County. Due to the lack of employment here in the county some have left the county area. Also, if they are here, they might not meet the income guidelines.
- New DCDEE Rule changes that may result in centers dropping below Four Stars.
- Low Demand “Parents need full day/full year care
- Administrative Capacity of Contracting Agency “Expanding requires technical assistance and support to sites. Insufficient staff to provide the support.
- Pool of available/interested providers has been maxed out – “Providers are losing interest in the NC Pre-K program. They are paid more for DSS Subsidy children, receive the funding for 12 months, and have less requirements related to ratio/staffing/ERS etc.”
- Funding can only be used for slots “Funding could be accepted if we were able to use the funds to increase rates or for program development and capacity building.
- Public School principals need training related to NCPK
- Rates paid to sites are insufficient to support the true cost of care
- Other resources are not available for sites to access
- Providers need increased professional development
- Timing of expansion award is too late regarding child find
- Currently expansion is not feasible as we are financially struggling to maintain the current sites with no slot increase. We are looking to maintain our current sites with the mandated teacher salary increases and hope in the future to expand in the areas that could sustain a classroom.
- If more children, we could ask for more to pay for qualified teachers.
- The State rate does not provide sufficient funding for slots in Wake County market. Nearly 70% of the slots are Private Child Care slots. The State rate covers 59% of the cost. There are no additional local dollars to supplement the difference needed to serve more children.