

Community Needs Assessment Findings



Child Health, Safety & Wellbeing

1) Access to health care is inequitable

- Specialized care—especially mental health services—for children, mothers, and families not available
- Need to promote early intervention
- Transportation barriers
- Desire for more recreation options for young children
- Most significant in southern and western areas of the county

2) Latinx and African American families less well served

- Latinx parents expressed less connection to, awareness of child/family resources
- Latinx parents expressed distrust of childcare providers; reliance on informal networks
- Health disparities highest among African American population



Child Care Access

3) Child care availability crisis

- Many families struggle to find affordable, quality childcare with schedules that meet their needs
- Shortages of care are acute for infants and toddlers
- Child care desert in rural areas of the county

4) Affording child care

- Cost of care is unaffordable for many families.
- Combined costs for housing and child care exceed half of household budgets.
- Many families rely on a “hidden workforce” (family members, informal care) to make ends meet
 - Implications for kindergarten readiness

5) Economic growth and childcare shortage on a collision course

- Rapid residential development in eastern Chatham
- Major industrial employment centers being developed... in locations with little care
- Child care will get harder to find, while cost of living continues to rise
- Child care availability will constrain workforce availability



Child Care Infrastructure

6) Providers' financial struggle

- Gap between the real cost of child care and education and the funding available to providers
- Independent child care providers are struggling to survive financially.

7) Workforce pipeline is broken

- Child care workforce shortages stem from low pay, limited benefits, and lack of prestige
- College program enrollment is declining



High Quality Early Learning

8) Concerns about quality care

- View that children are safer with family
- Skepticism about quality of care
- Providers want better public understanding, support for their work

9) Understandings of kindergarten readiness vary

- Academics? Social skills? Developmental milestones?
- Parents feel pressure and uncertainty
- Need for a consistent definition and measures, along with community education

10) Barriers to accessing NC Pre-K

- Schedule does not align with parents' work days
- Lack of transportation
- Classes go underutilized, but this may mask latent demand