

Jackson County NC Child Care Efforts Update

Jackson County, North Carolina

January 2025

Unlocking Workforce Potential for Economic Growth

Child care is more than a basic need for families. It's an economic multiplier and an accelerator for economic growth. Accessible child care empowers workers to realize their true wage potential, providing employers with the workforce they need for growth. This leads to stronger economies and stronger communities.

What it means to communities and why it matters:



Workforce Empowerment

Having child care options supports parents, particularly women. With accessible child care, all parents seeking opportunity can pursue jobs and/or education, which directly impacts workforce availability, diversity and inclusivity.



Economic Growth

With readily available child care, parents who want to work can achieve their true earnings potential, the idea of wage realization. Accessible child care increases labor force participation, boosting productivity and economic output.



Community Well-Being

With workforce and growth in place, good child care programs also support child development, promote opportunity equity and foster a more balanced work-life environment for residents. This contributes to more vibrant outcomes for communities.

Child Care Solutions Activation Plan Process

Opportunities & Outcomes Workshop

A collaborative event where stakeholders convene to discuss challenges and opportunities related to child care in the local community, fostering collective understanding and finding agreement on desired outcomes.

Solution Pathways Review

A preliminary presentation of potential solutions and their anticipated impacts, designed to provide the community with a range of outcome options to target based on their preferences.

Child Care Solutions Activation Plan

A strategic roadmap for implementing solutions that best align with the community's identified goals, concentrating on the desired outcomes established through community engagement.

*September
2024*

*November
2024*

January 16, 2025



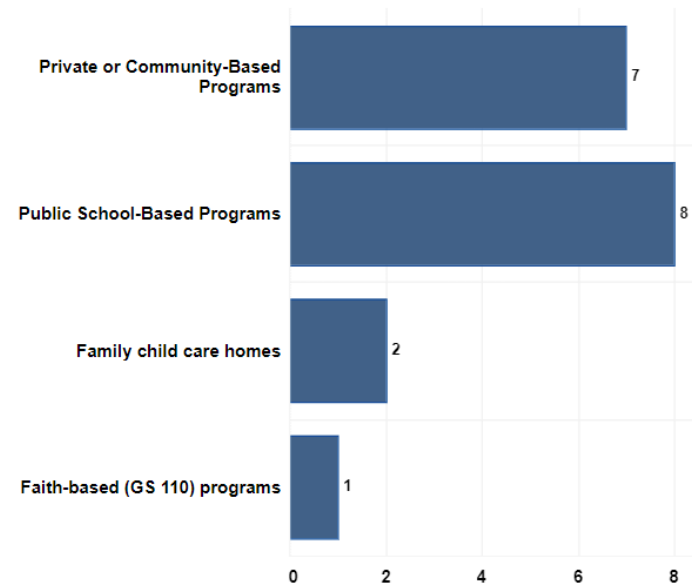
State of Child Care in Jackson County NC

Potential Need for Child Care

Total Under Age 6	1,635
Living with both parents, both in labor force	662
Living with father, father in labor force	313
Living with mother, mother in labor force	160

1,135 children with all available parents in workforce

Child Care Current Programs



County Quality Ratings Participation

Five Star	8
Four Star	3
Three Star	4
Two Star	0
One Star	1
Not Applicable	2

Problems, Challenges, and Opportunities

- Regulatory Barriers
- Workforce Shortage in Child Care Programs
- Subsidy Mismatches
- Equity Challenges for Special Needs and Low-Income Families
- Limited Afterschool and Summer Programs



Problems, Challenges, and Opportunities

- Infant Care Shortage
- Staffing Struggles
- Access and Transportation Challenges
- Unlicensed Care Reliance
- Sustainability Concerns for Providers



Problems, Challenges, and Opportunities

- Low Family Engagement
- Misconceptions About Child Care
- Behavioral Support Needs for Children
- Lack of Professional Recognition for Child Care Staff
- Limited Provider Engagement in Discussions or Initiatives



Problems, Challenges, and Opportunities

- Infrastructure and Space Constraints
- Unique Needs of Migrant and Day Laborer Populations
- Limited Hours of Operation and School Break Coverage
- Need for Greater Collaboration and Advocacy



Jackson County, North Carolina – Focus Areas

Organizational and Funding Support

- **Centralized Support Structure:** Proposal for a county-wide organization to coordinate resources, advocacy, and funding for child care. This entity would represent child care providers in policy discussions, ensure funding accessibility, and create a collective approach to child care challenges.
- **Community Subsidy Fund:** Advocacy for a community-based fund to close affordability gaps for families. The fund would provide financial support to families and providers, sustaining operations and increasing accessibility.

Workforce and Talent Pipeline Development

- **Unified Pipeline Programs:** Emphasis on a coordinated child care workforce pipeline spanning high schools, community colleges, and universities. Initiatives could include pre-apprenticeships, scholarships, and certifications to encourage career pathways starting in high school.
- **Partnerships for Training and Retention:** Partnerships with educational institutions would provide students with real-world experience through internships or paid apprenticeships, fostering interest and advancement in child care careers.

Jackson County, North Carolina – Focus Areas

Start-Up and Ongoing Subsidies for Child Care

- **Providers Incentives and Low-Cost Facilities:** Support for new child care businesses through grants, tax incentives, and access to low-cost county-owned properties. This would lower barriers for entrepreneurs to establish child care centers.
- **Sustainable Operational Funding:** Ongoing operational subsidies to support new centers beyond state and federal funding. Without sufficient financial backing, centers risk closure and reduced access for families.

Expanded Programming Models

- **Summer and After-School Programs:** Quick-win opportunities identified in expanding summer and after-school programming to meet community needs for school-aged children. Collaborations with existing providers could bridge critical gaps and support working parents.
- **Flexible Child Care Models:** Development of alternative care models tailored to community-specific needs, such as kinship or multi-generational care, particularly for the Hispanic community, ensuring diverse, viable options for families.

Child Care Solutions Activation Plan Presentation

January 16, 2025

6:15 PM

Department On Aging
100 County Services Park
Sylva, NC 28779

Thank You!



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