

In the Spotlight...

Why School Attendance Matters

Schools celebrate each September as Attendance Matters Month to ensure parents know the importance that each single day represents in a child's academic year. Regular school attendance, especially in the early years, puts children on the right track to reading proficiently by third grade. But unfortunately, the opposite may also be true - chronic absence in preschool and kindergarten often leads to lower level reading efficiency by third grade.



Schools across the Twin Counties have these signs posted near entrances.

So what is considered chronic absence?

In February 2018, the NC State Board of Education adopted a definition of chronic absence as any student in NC who misses 10 percent of school days in one academic year. This ten percent equals roughly 18 days out of the classroom. Just think of all the instruction a child misses in those 18 days! It's no wonder these children fall behind and struggle to catch up to their peers. Ultimately, research also shows that by sixth grade, chronic absenteeism becomes a leading indicator that a student will drop out of high school.

Chronically absent students are found in every type of community – urban, suburban, and rural. A child's health is a huge indicator, and it's actually the leading cause of chronic absenteeism. But it's not just "physical" health, like a prolonged illness, that impacts student attendance. Absenteeism can be attributed to other factors making up the overall health of a student. Overall health takes into consideration mental and behavioral issues as well as dental health. Even environmental factors can affect chronic absenteeism, such as housing and food insecurity, or relationships with peers and teachers. If a child is being bullied or doesn't get along with a teacher, he may miss school as a way to cope with the situation.

The good news is that chronic absenteeism can be turned around, and in some cases preventable. Because research also shows that when students improve their attendance rates, they improve their academic prospects and chances for graduating!

To help curb chronic absenteeism, parents can provide a stable, nurturing home that promotes the importance of school attendance. Start your child's day with a healthy breakfast at home, or encourage them to eat breakfast at school. Get involved with your child's homework to ensure that he fully understands the material and can solve problems using what he has learned. If your child starts trying to avoid going to school, calmly sit down and talk with your child. Listen to what he has to say for any clues of bullying or other negative relationships at school. Talk with the teacher, principal, or bus driver if you need to. If your child has a prolonged sickness, reach out to the teacher and develop a timeline to help your student catch up.

While absenteeism and its ill effects start early, all of us can work together to help young children start out on the right track. A great proactive measure is to have children attend day care regularly so this transfers over as a positive habit into school. Talk with your school representatives for other tips and additional information, or log on to www.buildthefoundation.org.



DEPC Ready Schools Coordinator Courtney Callinan's alter-ego is Timely Tina. Tina has been spotted at Coker-Wimberley Elementary School reminding parents and students to be in school and on time - every minute counts!



Family First Counselors are available to offer families information on over 150 community resources, including places to play throughout Nash and Edgecombe counties. Counselors can help meet the needs of your family whether it's quality child care referrals or local parenting programs. Family First also has resources such as DVDs and books on just about any child related concern. If you need child care options, parenting information, or any of the services offered below, please call Family First at 252.985.4300, or visit us at 215 Lexington St., Rocky Mount. Counselors are available Monday through Thursday, 9 am to 5 pm.

Circle of Parents is a support group for parents of children, ages birth to 18, with special needs (any physical or developmental disability). Parents are able to spend time connecting with each other, offering encouragement, support and suggestions for managing the care of their special needs child. During these meetings, the school-age children participate in developmentally age appropriate activities within their own Circle of Kids group. Dinner and childcare (for younger children) is provided. This program meets most Monday nights from 6:00 - 8:00 pm during the school year as well as other specified times for field trips and family activities.

Registration required: Contact Jennifer Cobb at ext. 270 or jcobb@depc.org

DEPC Scholarship Program offers families opportunities for assistance with child care if they are working a minimum of 30 hours per week or in school full time. This program serves children birth to age 3 and it follows the same financial guidelines for income eligibility as the Department of Social Services. Families are required to pay parent fees on average of 10% of their gross income.

How to apply: Applications may be printed from the DEPC web page or picked up from 215 Lexington Street in Rocky Mount.

FIT (Families Involved Together)

We are a diverse group of empowered parents working to break down barriers and build skills that help us successfully advocate for our children. For FIT meeting dates or general information contact Maggie Latta at ext. 235 or mlatta@depc.org

Free Play Fridays at DEPC

Throughout the year, our stimulating indoor play room is available every Friday from 9:30 – 11:30 am for Free Play Fridays. Parents and children are encouraged to come take advantage of the variety of developmentally appropriate play centers in the playroom and meet new families in the area with young children. **No registration required. Also, don't forget that our engaging Discovery Park is open year round!!**

Kaleidoscope® Play and Learn Groups *The 16 Week series continues through mid-December.

These sessions are offered weekly from 9:30 – 11 AM at the following locations:

DEPC - Tuesday and Wednesday **Cooley Library in Nashville – Wednesday** **Edgecombe County Library in Tarboro - Thursday**
Groups are designed for families with children ages birth to 5 who want to: learn fun ideas for hands on learning, nurture their child's positive social skills; and, increase their family's healthy lifestyle habits! Each group has free play, arts and crafts, healthy snacks, and group time! Incentives are available!
Contact Jennifer Cobb at ext. 270 or jcobb@depc.org, or visit the playgroup of your choice!

North Carolina Pre-K (NC Pre-K) serves children that live in Edgecombe and Nash counties who are 4 by August 31st of each school year. Children who are at-risk are served in this state-wide program on the school calendar year. NC Pre-K also has financial guidelines, but parents do not have to meet working hour requirements or school guidelines. There are no fees to families using this program. Slots may still be available for classes starting in September.

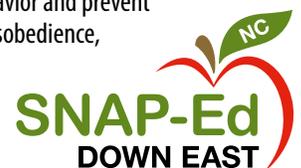
How to apply: Applications may be picked up at 215 Lexington Street in Rocky Mount. For more information call Family First.

The Incredible Years® is an evidence-based 16 week parenting curriculum that has proven positive results for families. During the FREE series, parents learn the importance of spending quality time with their child and engage in child-directed activities with a focus on praise, parental coaching techniques, and positive behavior management practices. Many fun participation incentives are offered weekly (ie: gas cards, toys, books, etc.).

The Incredible Years Preschool series for parents of children ages 3-5 will begin again in **February 2020**.

Registration required. For more information or to register contact Jennifer Cobb at ext. 270 or jcobb@depc.org. Dinner and childcare provided.

Triple P® When you become a parent you're expected to be an instant expert. But all parents struggle from time to time— and that's where the Triple P— Positive Parenting Program can help. Triple P is a world-acclaimed program that gives you the skills you need to manage misbehavior and prevent problems from happening in the first place. From toddler tantrums to a teenager's defiance, from bedtime dramas to outright disobedience, Triple P helps you sort through the issues that affect families everywhere. And you can be confident that Triple P works. It has more than 30 years' ongoing scientific research to back it up and is now used in 25 countries around the world. You can choose anything from attending one workshop on a broad topic that effects your family, to scheduling a one-on-one consultation sessions around a specific parenting issue and even do Triple P online in the convenience of your own home. Triple P is available at all times for every family in Edgecombe and Nash counties. For more information on Triple P contact Sonja Person at ext. 241 or sperson@depc.org, or visit the Triple P website at <http://www.triplep-parenting.com/nc>



Learn more about DEPC's SNAP-Ed initiative for healthier living!

Visit <http://depc.org/snap-ed-health-and-nutrition/>

October 1 5:30 – 8 pm	Triple P Seminar – Raising Confident, Competent Children Call the Family First line at ext. 220 to register. Free dinner and childcare for those who RSVP.
October 3 4:30 – 6:30 pm	Party in the Park This free event is open to all that attend. We will be hosting the event to promote health, safety and literacy. There will be activities, music and movement, a healthy food tasting along with visits from special characters.
October 8 5:30 – 7 pm	F.I.T. is a group for parents interested in engaging with the health and wellness work of DEPC. Dinner and childcare provided. Please RSVP to mlatta@DEPC.org or call (252) 985-4300, ext. 235 so we can plan enough dinner for everyone.
November 12 5:30 – 7 pm	F.I.T. RSVP to mlatta@DEPC.org or call (252) 985-4300, ext. 235 so we can plan enough dinner for everyone.
November 19 5:30 – 8pm	Triple P Seminar – Raising Resilient Children Call the Family First line at ext. 220 to register. Free dinner and childcare for those who RSVP.
December 10 5:30 – 7 pm	F.I.T. RSVP to mlatta@DEPC.org or call (252) 985-4300, ext. 235 so we can plan enough dinner for everyone.
December 17 5:30 – 8 pm	Triple P Discussion Group - Hassle Free Shopping Call the Family First line at ext. 220 to register. Free dinner and childcare for those who RSVP.



Try a new, healthier recipe for the holidays!

Pecan-Pumpkin Drops

Hands-on Time 18 Mins **Total Time** 32 Mins

Yield Serves 12 (serving size: 1 biscuit)

RECIPE BY **COOKING LIGHT**

Ingredients

4.5 ounces all-purpose flour (about 1 cup)	4.75 ounces whole-wheat flour (about 1 cup)
2 tablespoons brown sugar	2 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoon baking soda	1/2 teaspoon salt
Dash of ground nutmeg	2 tablespoons cold butter, cut into small pieces
1 cup canned pumpkin	3/4 cup plus 1 tablespoon low-fat buttermilk
1/2 cup coarsely chopped pecans, toasted	Cooking spray

How to Make It

Step 1 Preheat oven to 425°.

Step 2 Weigh or lightly spoon flours into dry measuring cups; level with a knife. Combine flours, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, salt, and nutmeg in a bowl, stirring with a whisk; cut in butter with a pastry blender or 2 knives until mixture resembles coarse meal. Combine pumpkin and buttermilk in a bowl, stirring with a whisk. Add pumpkin mixture and chopped pecans to flour mixture, stirring just until combined.

Step 3 Drop batter in mounds of about 1/3-cupfuls onto a baking sheet coated with cooking spray. Bake at 425° for 14 minutes or until golden. Remove from baking sheet; cool 5 minutes on a wire rack. Serve warm.



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The Down East Partnership for Children is a nonprofit organization founded in 1993 by citizens concerned about education and economic development of Nash and Edgecombe Counties. It provides a model of services focused on prevention and intervention targeting young children ages 0-8. It leverages investments from local, state and national partners to launch every child as a healthy, lifelong learner by the end of the 3rd grade. For more information about DEPC, visit www.depc.org.

Did You Know?

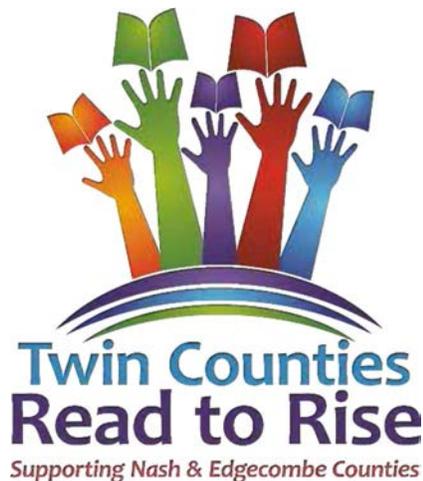
Children and adolescents aged 6 to 17 years should have at least 60 minutes of physical activity each day!



More than 100,000 Meals Served!

Congratulations to all Summer Feeding and Learning Sites in Nash and Edgecombe Counties! You served more than 100,000 meals this summer!!

Thank you to our community partners, **Cummins**, **Nash Health Care**, and **Lakeside Baptist Church** for generously contributing to the efforts of Summer Feeding/Summer Learning this year. As a part of the Read to Rise initiative, Summer Feeding sites expanded to include summer learning resources. Five summer learning coaches were also instrumental in working with sites offering technical assistance and support to incorporate learning opportunities and physical activities. Summer Feeding/Summer Learning partners provided great support to help make our mission a reality for so many children in the Twin Counties. Summer Feeding Partners include **Nash-Rocky Mount Schools**, **Edgecombe County Schools**, the **Food Bank** and **Cape Fear Tutoring** (Sponsor for K&W).



South Rocky Mount Community Center kicked off its popsicles reading program



Career Day at Truth Tabernacle. We have a future teacher and doctor.