



Addressing today's child care crisis

A Message by Henrietta Zalkind
DEPC Executive Director
(as it appeared in the Rocky Mount Telegram)

There's no doubt the last couple of years have been hard for children and families across the country and in our community. During the pandemic, child care centers stayed open and served first responders and supported families that must work outside their home. Today, as we are moving back to "normal," child care centers face even lower enrollment levels (down 60%) than before the pandemic. Simply put, the landscape has changed for early education and families.

North Carolina is currently facing an unprecedented workforce crisis in early childhood. Fewer people are entering the early childhood field and qualified teachers are leaving the field at high rates due to low compensation, lack of benefits and lack of recognition in the field. Did you know the average pay for a child care teacher in Nash and Edgecombe counties is around \$10 per hour... even lower than the state average of \$12.

In addition, today, only 70 percent of households include two parents, and only 3.4 percent of all North Carolina families—single-parent and two-parent—have a stay-at-home parent who cares for children full time. Working families depend on quality early care and learning teachers to help them with the healthy intellectual, social, emotional and physical development of their infants, toddlers and preschoolers. These need to be the best possible experiences for our children.

The current early education system is under strain and requires additional resources to strengthen early childhood providers and teachers and support for families of young children. There are initiatives like Raise North Carolina and Family Forward NC to help bring attention to this across our state.



Raise North Carolina (RaiseNC.nc.gov) is a long-term public education campaign including social media, television ads and online ads in partnership with the many organizations and leaders that support our early learning network and educators. Look for this campaign soon.

Family Forward NC (familyforwardnc.com) is an initiative to improve children's health and well-being and keep North Carolina's businesses competitive. Family Forward NC's focus on workplace policies that impact young children and their families is rooted in research on brain development and future success. Employers have choices to help their families by flexible schedules or subsidizing child care as a benefit. Visit Family Forward NC for resources and download its toolkit as a guide.

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FREE PARTY in the PARK

Join us - **IN PERSON!**
Thursday, October 6
4PM - 6PM

DISCOVERY PARK 215 Lexington Street

Join us for **lots of fun, music and activities** centered around health, safety and literacy including:
The Wisdom Tooth Program Chick Fil A Cow
Spencer the Sweet Potato Mobile Farmer's Market
and many more vendors!

Ripe Revival Mobile Farmers Market will be on site and DEPC will be giving away **\$10 Vouchers** to the first 50 families who have children under age 8



FamilyFirst
 (252)985-4300 (888)600-1685

**Family Services
 Registration Code**

You may use this
 QR code to register
 for Family Services
 programs.



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 other services offered below, please call Family First at **252.985.4300 ext. 220**. Counselors are available Monday through Thursday, 9 am to 5 pm and Fridays 9-12 Noon.

North Carolina Pre-K (NC Pre-K)

NC Pre-K Applications are available for the 2022-2023 school year (English and Spanish) at DEPC and on the DEPC website with a list of provider sites. Program locations are in private sites, public schools, and Head Start. Contact Family Services if you need help selecting an NC Pre-K service provider.

Circle of Parents

A support group for parents of children, ages birth to 18, with special needs (any physical or developmental disability). Parents can spend time connecting with each other, offering encouragement, support and suggestions for managing the care of their special needs child. Circle meets on Monday nights from 6:00 – 8:00 in a hybrid model (some at DEPC and some virtually on zoom). All children in the family are also able to participate in a Circle of Kids group meeting with supportive and developmentally appropriate activities. Please contact Iris Ray at iray@depc.org to register, for more information on available resources and to learn more about Circle of Parents. Programming runs from Sept. 12-June 12.

REGISTRATION REQUIRED. Contact Iris Ray at iray@depc.org

Kaleidoscope® Play & Learn Groups

16-week series



Our Kaleidoscope Playgroup series for Fall 2022 is underway, at Down East Partnership in Rocky Mount and at Spaulding Family Resource Center in Spring Hope. We spend time playing, learning from each other, and discovering ways to help our children continue learning at home. Caregivers who attend 13 out of the 16 meetings, complete a developmental questionnaire for their child, and participate in a Triple P Positive Parenting Program activity will receive a \$25 Walmart gift card at the end of the series. **Please contact Debra Boudreau at dboudreau@depc.org or 985-4300 ext. 270 to register.**

Who is eligible?

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 the state-wide program on the school calendar year. NC Pre-K also has financial guidelines but the parents do not have to reach working hour requirements or school guidelines. There are no fees to families using this program.

HOW TO APPLY: Applications may be accessed from the DEPC web page (link below) or picked up from 215 Lexington Street in Rocky Mount.

Link to NC Pre-K forms, visit <https://depc.org/child-care/pre-k-information-page/>

For more information call the Family First Line at 252-985-4300.



Triple P®

Triple P Seminar Series: 3 week series on Oct. 27, Nov. 8, and Nov. 29 from 6:00-8:00pm. For caregivers of children birth to age 5. Join us for just 1 or all 3!

Triple P Group: Six week personalized course for caregivers of children ages 3-8, Thursdays at Down East Partnership beginning Nov. 3 from 5:30-8:00pm

Triple P Briefs: Schedule one-on-one coaching for topics of your choice

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 all families. Choose from attending a workshop on a broad topic that effects your family to scheduling a one-on-one consultation around a specific parenting issue. Triple P can be done online in the convenience of your own home. Triple P is for every family in Edgecombe and Nash counties. For more information on Triple P parenting support and upcoming events, please contact Sarah Winters at SWinters@depc.org or visit the Triple P website at <http://www.triplep-parenting.com/ncLearn>

APPLY for Pre-K TODAY!
 Visit: www.depc.org Call: 252-985-4300
 Down East Partnership for Children
 For more information about School Readiness and Registration, please visit depc.org/registeredandready

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 5 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. For more information, call the DEPC Family First Line.

We are offering one-on-one parenting support. Call DEPC's Family First line at 252-985-4300 for more information.

Sweet Potato & Apple Bake Recipe from MyPlate.gov

Ingredients

- 3 1/2 cups sweet potatoes, drained (2 - 15 ounce cans; save 2 Tablespoons of the liquid)
- 2 cups apples (peeled, cored and cut into bite-sized pieces)
- 6 teaspoons brown sugar (2 Tablespoons, packed)
- 1/3 cup chopped nuts (pecans, walnuts or any other type)
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted (unsalted)

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Put sweet potatoes in baking dish.
3. Add apples.
4. Pour 2 Tablespoons of the sweet potato liquid over the mixture.
5. Mix brown sugar, nuts, flour, and melted butter together in a small bowl.
6. Sprinkle over the top of the sweet potato/apple mix.
7. Bake for 20-30 minutes, until the top is golden brown and bubbly.



The Inside Scoop (an activity from our Playgroups!)

We know that you know what the outside of a pumpkin looks like! But have you and your child ever explored the inside of a pumpkin?

- Cover a table with newspaper or a vinyl tablecloth.
- Set a large pumpkin on the table.
- Adult - Carefully cut a circle around the top stem of the pumpkin.
- Lift the top of the pumpkin up and lay to the side.
- Have your child use a scoop or his/her hands to spoon out seeds and the inside of the pumpkin.



Ask your child – What does the inside of a pumpkin look like, smell like or feel like? How is the inside different from the outside? (You can also wash off and toast the seeds for a snack!)

Banana Pumpkin Muffins



Ingredients:

- 2 very ripe bananas
- 1 cup pumpkin puree
- 4 eggs
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- 3 tbsp maple syrup or honey
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tbsp baking powder
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 2 1/3 cups rolled oats
- Optional toppings: chocolate chips, chopped nuts

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line muffin tin with paper liners.
2. Add ingredients into a blender in the order listed. Blend until the ingredients are completely mixed.
3. Fill paper liners with the batter almost to the top. Top with any toppings as wanted.
4. Bake the muffins for 18 to 20 minutes until golden brown. Cool completely, then enjoy!

How Can Kids Help Out?:

- peel bananas, place paper liners, push buttons on blender

CHOPCHOP FAMILY Recipe

Not Your Grandma's Fried Chicken



Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons olive or canola oil
- 1 cup fine bread crumbs or panko
- 1/2 cup whole-wheat flour
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 2 large eggs
- 1 tablespoon dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 6 skinless chicken thighs
- 1 lemon

Instructions:

1. Turn the oven on, set heat to 400 degrees.
2. Pour the oil on the baking sheet and, using your clean hands or a paper towel, spread it around.
3. Put the bread crumbs, flour, salt, pepper, and cayenne (if you like it) on the plate. Mix well.
4. Crack the eggs into the bowl and beat them with the fork or whisk until pale yellow. Add the mustard and thyme and mix well.
5. Add the chicken pieces and swish them around until they are well coated with the egg mixture.
6. Remove the chicken pieces, one at a time, from the egg mixture and let any extra egg mixture drip off.
7. Dip the chicken pieces, one at a time, in the bread crumb mixture, rolling them and pressing down to coat each side.
8. Shake off any extra coating, then put the chicken pieces on the baking sheet. Be sure to wash your hands with soap and water after handling raw chicken.
9. Once the oven temperature has reached 400 degrees, put the baking sheet in the oven and bake for 15 minutes. Using a spatula or tongs, turn the chicken pieces over and bake until golden brown, 15-20 more minutes. Serve right away, with a quarter of a lemon on each plate.



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(252) 985-4300 | depc.org

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.



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Local Listening Circles Coming Soon

Locally, the Down East Partnership continues to support children and families through a variety of resources to launch children as lifelong learners by the end of the third grade. This year, DEPC will conduct a community scan to help shape the future of early childhood programs in our community and base future efforts on this community's specific needs. DEPC will partner with community groups to host listening circles/focus groups where families can

share their experiences around obtaining care for their children. We will facilitate discussions on child care choices (traditional child care, stay home with parent, family/friend/neighbor care, etc.) to better serve families in our community. Please join us to help shape this work.

Thank you for all you do each and every day to improve the lives of the children in our community. You make the difference and we hope to see you soon at the Partnership, Discovery Park, at a listening circle or upcoming event.

Mark Your Calendar and Stay Connected!

Upcoming Events:

Party in the Park: Visit Discovery Park Oct. 6, 4 to 6 p.m., Mobile Farmer's Market, Fun activities for the family!

Triple P Seminar Series: 3 week series on Oct. 27, Nov. 8, and Nov. 29 from 6:00-8:00pm. For caregivers of children birth to age 5. Join us for just 1 or all 3!

Triple P Group: Six week personalized course for caregivers of children ages 3-8, Thursdays at Down East Partnership beginning Nov. 3 from 5:30-8:00pm

DEPC Open House: Join us for an Open House as part of the Rocky Mount Chamber's After Hours - Dec. 1, 5 to 7 p.m.

Training Calendar: Visit depc.org for the latest Training Calendar for Child Care Professionals.

Week of the Young Child: April 16-21, 2023

DEPC Golf Classic: April 21, 2023, Cotton Valley, Tarboro

Follow us on social media for all program updates!

We will share updates about upcoming events and activities on our social media channels! Please visit, like and share our information!

