2024 IMPACT REPORT



Down East Partnership for Children

depc.org

Messsage from the **EXECUTIVE Director**

Thank you for making the celebration of 30 years of service to the twin counties a wonderful, year-long effort. We are thankful for you and the thousands of people who make the work of the partnership a reality.



We now look toward the next 30 years and continuing to strengthen the network of services that support young children and their families. We will continue to raise awareness about the challenges facing families and the child care community. Many families continue to struggle with the high cost of care and child care businesses are challenged with retaining teachers. We will continue to evolve and change as needed to provide the services that will meet the needs of our community.

We look forward to continuing to build connections with our community with a focus on launching every child as a healthy, lifelong learner by the end of the third grade. We hope you will join us as we continue this important work together.

Henrietta Zalkind **Executive Director**

Resources for Families

There are many resources available to parents in our community. If you are not sure what services are available, please visit our website (depc.org) or call us. Even if it is not a service we provide directly, we can often help connect you to the right resource to meet your needs.

- Links for activities and ideas for summer learning: https://depc.org/ready-schools/summer-learning/
- Tips on resilience: https://depc.org/recipe-for-resilience/
- Summer Feeding/Summer Learning sites: https://depc.org/families/summer-feeding-sites/
- Building Blocks Newsletter: https://depc.org/building-blocks-newsletter-2/
- Finding child care: https://depc.org/child-care/finding-quality-child-care-0-12/
- Positive Parenting Tips: https://www.triplep-parenting.com/nc-en/triple-p/
- Rootle: https://www.pbs.org/show/rootle/
- Sesame Street in Communities: https://sesameworkshop.org/resources/
- Act Early: https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/

Family First counselors are available to offer families information on over 150 **community resources** including choosing quality child care referrals. Stay connected with the programs we are currently offering to parents. Visit depc.org or scan the OR code.





On The Cover

Special thank you to Steve Felton for the donation of his talent to support the children and families in our community. The cover of this publication was inspired by one of his paintings. Steve is a longtime champion and we are honored to work with him. If you are Interested in investing in this piece of art or another work by Mr. Felton let us know or visit his site at sfeltondesigns.com.

Our Vision

We believe that all children and their families can reach their full potential when surrounded by a united and supportive community.

Our Mission

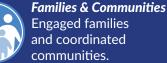
Launching every child as a healthy, lifelong learner by the end of third grade!





Early Care & Education High quality early care and education.





Engaged families and coordinated communities.



Health and development on track beginning before birth.



Ready Schools Effective teaching and learning for K-3 students, inside and out, 365 days a year.

2 depc.org

IEN (July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024)

825

children 0-8 in both Edgecombe & Nash counties

children benefited from and NC Pre-K

ECE teachers served

through WAGE\$

82,032 meals served at Summer Feeding/ Learning Sites

DEPC childcare scholarships

children benefited from

parent education and support programs

2,152 visits made to Discovery Park

early childhood professionals receiving training

households assisted in child care choices

> children in kindergarten transition activities



children are receiving books at home each month through Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

Why We Need Your Support LITERACY POVERTY

One of the most important predictors of school success and high school graduation is reading on grade level by the end of the third grade.

32% of children in Edgecombe County and **21%** of Nash County children currently live in poverty.

HEALTH

31% in Edgecombe County and 21% of Nash County children live in food insecure households.

D CARE

On average, single parents with infant or toddlers in child care spend 40% of their income on their child's care.

BRAIN DEVELOPME

First 2,000 Days are important

The first 2.000 days of a child's life are the most important time for their brain development. The most rapid period of development in life happens in children's earliest years.

School Readiness

Both children and schools need to be ready for success by 3rd grade

Quality early care, literacy, summer learning and school attendance are all important to early school success. School Community Teams across Nash and Edgecombe counties work with DEPC's Ready Schools and **Ready Communities Collaboratives to** continuously strengthen early school success for all children.

Highlights from 2024

Faithful Families

Faithful Families continues to be one of DEPC's most successful community based health initiatives. Two new churches, Thorne Chapel and Weeping Mary, successfully completed the virtual Faithful Families 9-week course for FY24.

To date we have 20 churches from Edgecombe and Nash County that have successfully completed the class:

Nash County

St. James Missionary Baptist Church Mt. Zion First Baptist Church Mt. Carmel AME First Baptist Middlesex St. Paul/ Rocky Mount Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Church First Timothy Church of Love Bunn Chapel Baptist Church St. John Missionary Baptist Church White Oak MBC



Edgecombe County

Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church Dunamis Outreach Ministries St. Mark AME House of Resurrection St. Stephen Missionary Baptist Church/Tarboro St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church/Tarboro Salvation & Praise Morning Glory/ Tarboro Legget Chapel Baptist Church Thorne Chapel Weeping Mary MBC/Tarboro



Professional Development at Heart of Joyce West Award

The Joyce West Award was established to honor the memory of DEPC's beloved former employee and advocate for professional development. It is presented to an early

childhood professional that works in Edgecombe or Nash county licensed early childhood facilities, has the highest amount of professional development contact hours, and at least once technical assistance goal. (with a member of DEPC provider services team). The 2024 recipient of the Joyce West Award is **Ms. Tammy Johnson, Director of Apple Tree Wee School**.



Addressing the Child Care Crisis

This year we hosted a forum called "Child Care and the Bottom Line." Community members and business leaders discussed how to address the child care crisis and ways employers can create family friendly workplaces. It was a great conversation and an opportunity to raise awareness of the challenges (high cost of child care, teacher retention, non-competitive salaries) facing families and the child care community. This conversation will continue. Please contact us if you would like to connect.



Week of the Young Child

Community partners, board and community members volunteered to be guest readers as a part of this year's Week of the Young Child Celebration! Think & Grow welcomed Sara Lee's Cheryl Guilford. DEPC playgroups welcomed board member Glenda Lawrence Knight. Thanks also to Foundation Builders and Ma Puddins for hosting and guest readers Amelia Harper, Pam Gould, Felisa Hunter and Leigh Daughtridge for volunteering to read!

Playgroups Continue to GROW!

Kaleidoscope Play & Learn groups are now in three locations – DEPC, Spring Hope and now Tarboro. Kaleidoscope Play and Learn[®] 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!



7th Annual Golf Classic BIGGEST YET

Congratulations to all participants of the 7th Annual Fore Every Child Golf Classic held at Cotton Valley in Tarboro. It was a great day of golf that made a big difference for our community.

The next tournament is scheduled for **April 25, 2025**.





Volunteers make a difference

Thank you to the many volunteers who take time out of their busy schedules to share their time, talents and treasures with DEPC. A huge shout out to our PNC team who works with us throughout the year! Thank you!



Summer Feeding/Summer Learning reaches thousands

Mayor Sandy Roberson and Representative Allen Chesser proclaimed Summer Learning Week and invited children from Restoration Worship Center Summer Camp with Pastor Luther Barnes, Camp Director, Donisha Barnes and Assistant Director, Kimberly Davis all in attendance.



Arkansas delegation visits DEPC

The Pritzker Foundation brought a delegation from Arkansas to visit DEPC and learn about the early childhood education system in our community. Jamie Rayford, Chief Operating Officer of the Batesville Area Chamber of Commerce said, "I cannot begin to share with you the number of amazing ideas that we took away from our time with you nor the level of excitement that our core team has to debrief and get started. Without a doubt we are going to be following the Down East Partnership's lead, as many across the country working to build and strengthen early childhood systems should be. We all have a great deal to learn about the successes DEPC has had due to their team's servant leadership."



Did you like it, love it or try it?

DEPC introduces healthy food tastings to young children in the community as part of its Snap Ed health initiative!



MEALS SERVED

KIDS REACHED

520

Grant connects health services to child care centers

DEPC's Healthy Kids Collaborative is working to connect mobile health clinics with child care centers to serve staff and families. OIC visited Foundation Builder's Academy to provide Pre-K physicals to children who needed it for compliance with NC PreK. Thanks to a grant from the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, we will build upon the partnership's Farm to Early Ed (FEED) work and expand DEPC's nutrition and wellness work to create a culture of health at home, child care and school. It connects the medical community to child care centers and elementary schools participating in FEED, improving equitable food and healthcare access for children, families, and staff. We have already started to partner with local resources to connect providers and families to more services.

Westside Church of Christ Partnership

For the third consecutive year, Westside Church of Christ Partnered with DEPC's LHOC Committee to provide back-to-school backpacks for Latino Hispanic families.





"I am so grateful for the incredible resources..."

As my daughter has gotten older, we have dealt with disobedience and life changes that my husband, nor I were fully equipped alone to manage. Luckily, through DEPC and the resources they offer, I was able to participate in a few briefs offered through Triple P! Sarah was extremely helpful and supportive during our disobedience briefs and made wonderful suggestions, one being a behavior chart that we implemented in our home and it made a HUGE difference! Once that was squared away our second child was to be arriving soon and I was concerned about my 4 year old's reaction, behavior, and feelings surrounding this important life change. Again, Sarah was incredibly helpful, encouraging, and supportive during this process as we navigated ways to prepare my 4 year old for the arrival of her new baby sister like reading books about becoming a big sister, playing with baby dolls and acting out specific scenarios that would surely take place once baby sister was here, creating a space in the nursery just for my 4 year old so that she could have her own space while I take care of the baby, and give her certain "jobs" to help with her new baby sister! I am so grateful to DEPC and the incredible resources they offer, our family has benefited greatly from them.

"Joining Circle of Parents saved my family"

Joining Circle of Parents has saved my family, helped my confidence, and strengthened my voice, and my parenting. I have 4 amazing children who all deal with medical difficulties. I felt like I was drowning in how to parent and unsure of how capable I was able to parent efficiently. Since attending COP I have grown as a parent, personally, and as an advocate. Circle provides



me and my kids with a place to feel safe and judgment-free. I learn about healthy foods and new ways to incorporate them into my children's diet. The child care allows me to feel safe and know that my kids are cared for. While in child care my daughter who deals with social anxiety has an opportunity to socialize with other children in her age group. My older kids can do things that appeal to them and talk about issues they have in Children's Corner. While they are cared for I can relax and embrace my Circle family. We talk, care, and support each other.

Thankful for Triple P Discussion Groups

Our family discovered the DEPC from a simple flyer hanging up at the YMCA. There was no need for my family when I discovered the flyer, but it was memorable. About a year later my family bought what we believed to be our forever home. We moved in full of excitement, with a new faced challenge, night-time. Odd yes, but my two children who were three and four at the time were struggling at night, causing my husband and I frustration after moving in. Going to a typical workout at the YMCA, I passed by the flyer for a Triple P topic of "Bedtime Routine". I knew I needed to go. As a busy nurse I made the time to attend, while my children were able to attend the childcare. We were able to eat a nice dinner together, easing my children into the environment. During the seminar I quickly realized my problem at home, our bedtime routine which is so impactful for children. I gained the knowledge and the material I needed to implement a better routine for my kids, and by the 3rd night we resolved our issues.

We have had many other encounters through Down East Partnerships for Children that improved our parenting skills resulting in less struggles and more positivity in our family adventure. We are so appreciative.

"Forever grateful for the knowledge DEPC equipped me with"

Our family's experience with DEPC's Kaleidoscope Play Groups was phenomenal in multiple ways. To give you a little background, our daughter was born prematurely and with a trending-to-belarger-than-usual cranium. Unfortunately, this caused multiple red flags to be thrown by her pediatrician and left her seemingly developmentally delayed with a need for speech, auditory, an MRI, and testing. I wanted to offer her the best possible scenario for whatever life brought our way and this is where DEPC held my hand. Both Debra and Lora heard the fear in our story and utilized every resource to calm my nerves. Lora worked on my daughter's intrapersonal growth during playgroup sessions by helping her facilitate budding relationships with peers and maintain attention and eye contact during play. Debra helped me complete developmental milestone check-ins and offered materials on how to further assist my daughter to reach said milestones. Without their guidance, I would not have navigated these uncharted waters so smoothly. I'll be forever grateful for the knowledge DEPC equipped me with and relationships with common-season families it helped me foster.



30th Anniversary Family Fun Day Carnival A HUGE Success!

The Down East Partnership for Children (DEPC) was honored to celebrate its 30th Anniversary with a Family Fun Day Carnival on North Carolina Wesleyan's campus. The event brought nearly 500 people to the campus, serving150 families with activities focused on health and literacy.

"We are grateful to the community for supporting this event and thankful to our sponsors and vendors for providing interactive games and resources for families," said DEPC Executive Director Henrietta Zalkind. "It was a great way to celebrate our 30th Anniversary and just think how many of our families and children are seeing a college campus in their own backyard for the first time ever!"

Mark Hinson, Vice President of Advancement, North Carolina Wesleyan University, said "North Carolina Wesleyan University was honored to support the Down East Partnership for Children as they celebrated 30 years of empowering families with young learners in our region. Providing them space on Wesleyan's campus for this milestone event was a natural fit, as we share a commitment to fostering educational opportunities for all ages. We're grateful for this affiliation and wish the Down East Partnership continued success in their vital work for the community."

We appreciate the support of the 40 vendors who participated.



A Mother's Touch Bakery -Batts Family Food Truck Big Boys Bakery Blue Cross/Healthy Blue Boice Willis Book Harvest Braswell Memorial Library Bookmobile Carolina Complete Health Carolina Family Health Centres, Inc. D'licious Icy's Edgecombe County Health Dept. Healthy Start Baby Love Plus Exceptional Children's Assistance Center (ECAC) First Baptist Church Middlesex

Exhibitops / Vendops League of Women Voters Mojoe's BBQ & Grill Mom's Rising Monarch NC Wesleyan Admissions

NC Wesleyan Department of Public Health Pilot Club of Rocky Mount, Tarboro Ripe for Revival Ripple Effects Group Rocky Mount Fire Dept. Rocky Mount Folice Dept. Rocky Mount Transit

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Rootle STEP Sweet P's Galaxy Lemonade UNC Health (Nash Women's Center) United Healthcare Victory Readers at Victoria En Cristo

















Zalkind presented State's Top Honor

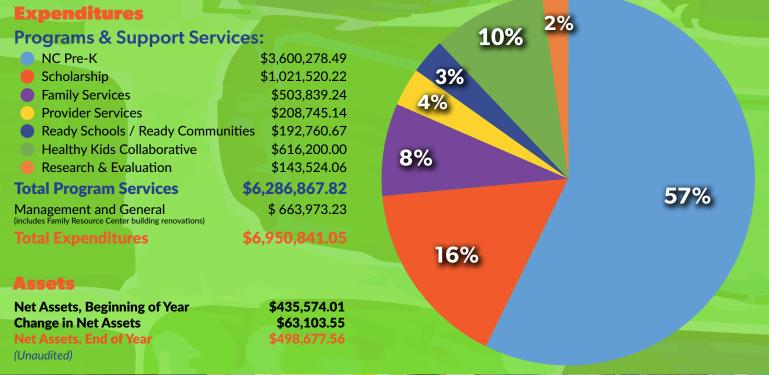
Down East Partnership for Children's Executive Director, Henrietta Zalkind, received the Order of the Long Leaf Pine at the partnership's recent Open House.

The Order of the Long Leaf Pine is North Carolina's highest civilian honor given to recognize lifetime achievements of community service. Established in 1961 it has been given by the Governor to those who have had significant impact upon our State. The award was presented to Zalkind by Karen Ponder, past president of the North Carolina Partnership for Children on behalf of Gov. Roy Cooper.

"Down East is a leader in the early childhood education community," said Ponder. "We are constantly bringing early childhood partners here to learn about the model and your great work. I believe the success of DEPC is in the relationships and partnerships you have built in this community and your unyielding commitment to young children."

Under Zalkind's leadership over the past 30 years, the partnership has continued to improve the quality of child care and education and has made care and learning more affordable and accessible for families. It turned the old YWCA building downtown into a thriving Family Resource Center that offers classes, playgroups and support groups for families with children who have special needs. It's mission is to launch every child as a healthy, lifelong learner by the end of the third grade.

Financials





Donors & In-Kind Sponsors

A. J. Fletcher Foundation Allegra Marketing & Print **Ameriprise Financial** Applebee's **Barnhill Family Foundation Believing by Faith Ministries** Boddie-Noell Enterprises, Inc. Nicholas Bunn Boddie & Lucy Mayo Boddie Foundation Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation Boice Willis Clinic P.A. **BPM Properties, LLC Buffalo Wild Wings Carlisle Funeral Home Carlton Thorpe Daley Fund** Chick-fil-A **Chief Electric Childtrust Foundation** Chipotle **Coastal Federal Credit Union Cummins Rocky Mount Engine Plant** Davenport Motor Company **Discount School Supply** E. B. Sports Wilson **Edgecombe Charitable Foundation** Edgecombe Community College Edgecombe County Elevance Health, Inc.

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Donations from July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024

Prime Smokehouse Purvis-Moyer Foot & Ankle Center M.K. Pritzker Family Foundation **Ripple Effects Group Roberson & Dupree** Sara Lee Bakery Sheetz Simmons & Harris Southern Bank St. Paul Baptist Church Strategic Twin Counties Education Partnership Steel Technology, Inc. Sun Drop/Long Beverage Sun Energy 1, LLC **Tarboro** Printing Harriet & George Thorpe Foundation **Tidal Wave Auto Spa** Trillium Health Resources **United Bank** United Way of Bartholomew County, Inc. United Way of the Greater Triangle United Way Tar River Region Vidant Health Foundation Wake Stone Corporation Watermark Solutions, LLC Welcome to Tarboro WellWorth Financial Woodard Dentistry Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, Inc.

Board of Directors 2024-25 Year

DEPC's Board of Directors and working committees are made up of parents, child care providers, representatives from the school systems, human service agencies, members of the faith community, local businesses and government. Each member is committed to ensuring the financial and programmatic integrity of the Partnership.

Officers & Committee Chairs:

BOARD CHAIR: Dr. Trent Mohrbutter, AVID Center

Benton Moss, Simmons & Harris Inc.

TREASURER: Natalie Bess, Edgecombe County Deputy County Manager SECRETARY:

Michelle Etheridge, Edgecombe County Health Department

CCR&R ADVISORY COMMITTEE CHAIR: Frenchy Davis, Foundation Builders Academy

COMMUNITY OUTREACH COMMITTEE CHAIR: Leigh Daughtridge, Monarch

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE CHAIR: Dr. Trent Mohrbutter, AVID Center

If you are interested in joining a Committee or the Board, please contact Henrietta Zalkind, Executive Director.

Members:

Betty Battle, Edgecombe County Department of Social Services Patricia Bell-Spruill, Step By Step Family Daycare Home Dr. Andrew Bryan, Edgecombe County Public Schools, Designee Dr. Michael Myrick Dr. Steve Ellis, Nash County Public Schools, Designee Melissa Dancy-Smith Eric Evans, Edgecombe County, Designee Natalie Bess Tanya Heath, Edgecombe Cooperative Extension Dr. Lew Hunnicutt, Nash Community College, Designee Adrienne Covington Dr. Glenda Lawrence-Knight, Town of Princeville Linda Knight, Child Care Center Pastor Gary Lee, First Baptist Middlesex **Durell Petway**, Parent Ashley Reynolds, Parent Stacie Shatzer, Nash County Manager, Designee Tia Foula Shermekka Williams, Parent Wendy Wilson, Envolve Health Pastor Robert Yarbrough, St. Mark AME Church



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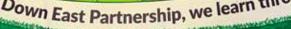
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At Down East Partnership, we learn through play



THE LINKS AT **APRIL 25 COTTON VALLEY LUNCH PROVIDED** 12:00

All skill levels invited. Handicap not required

SHOTGUN START

SUPERBALL FORMAT

Prizes for 1st, 2nd, 3rd place teams Closest to the Pin, Putting Contest and Longest Drive prizes



50/50 RAFFLE \$5 per ticket or 5 for \$20

\$360 per foursome iaan δ tee buster packaa **\$75 INDIVIDUAL**

REGISTER ONLINE AT

SPONSORSHIPS AVAILABLE Call 252-985-4300 with questions.

Learn more about our programs

Down East Partnership for Children offers a variety of services and resources for families with children ages 0-8. Scan the QR code to the right to view all of DEPC's family services and our programs for 2025!



Your donation builds dreams for our children!

Have you ever wondered how to make a difference in the lives of children in your own community? You can make that difference simply by supporting Down East Partnership for Children. Your donation helps support the many programs and opportunities necessary to fulfill our mission of "launching every child as a healthy, lifelong learner by the end of the third grade." No matter the amount, when you make the decision to give, you become a part of our mission, and we, along with the children in our community, have two words for you; Thank You!

Down East Partnership for For Every CHILD. FOR EVERY COMM	Children [•	Please make checks, corporate matches, or other gifts payable to: PC, P.O. Box 1245, Rocky Mount, NC 27802, ATTN: Jackie Kearney		
Name:					
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	nter future.	of \$ to help give chi ation to be included in the Champions Circle.		Volunteer Please contact me with volunteer opportunities with DEPC.	
Sixth Annual Fore Every Child Golf Classic	□ Prize donation	onsor (4-person team) Apr	NUS! il 25, 025	Monthly Gift Make a Monthly Gift to DEPC. Please contact me with more information.	
ΝΙ ΝΔΡ-ΗΙ Nutrition Assis	vas funded by USDA's Supplemental stance Program – SNAP. This institution portunity provider and employer.	a partner in the Smart Start network	(3) of the	qualified as a charitable organization under section 501(Internal Revenue Code. Contributions to DEPC are tax- e to the extent permitted by law*	