

Introducing A New Video Series for Parents

DEPC is excited to launch a new video series designed to support, encourage, and empower caregivers of young children. “Ask Sonja” will feature DEPC’s Family Services Coordinator, Sonja Person, sharing practical parenting tips, trusted resources, and helpful information on a wide variety of topics that matter to families every day.

Through short, easy-to-watch videos, parents and caregivers will gain access to guidance on common parenting challenges, child development, behavior strategies, communication, routines, emotional wellness, and more. Many of the topics featured in the series will be inspired by Triple P Parenting brief resources, an internationally recognized parenting program that focuses on building positive relationships, confidence, and practical skills for families.

“Ask Sonja” is designed to meet families where they are, offering simple, encouraging advice in a format that is accessible, relatable, and easy to fit into busy schedules. The videos will be shared online through DEPC’s digital platforms, making it easy for parents, caregivers, and community partners to watch, share, and revisit topics as needed.



At DEPC, we know that parenting does not come with a manual, but families do not have to navigate challenges alone. “Ask Sonja” is another way DEPC is working to strengthen families by providing trusted support, resources, and encouragement for parents of young children throughout our community.

We invite families to follow along, submit questions or topic ideas, and join us as we launch this exciting new resource for parents.

Community Partners Unite to Support Summer Learning

Another school year is coming to a close, and DEPC is gearing up for an impactful summer of supporting children and families across Nash County and Edgecombe Counties. Each year, we partner with incredible community sites to help prevent summer literacy loss and ensure children stay engaged, nourished, and thriving throughout the summer months. Last year, 89,388 meals were served at Summer Feeding, Summer Learning sites.

Thanks to the generous support of **Cummins Rocky Mount Engine Plant**, a long-standing champion of summer learning, and this year’s Summer Feeding Kids Meals sponsors—Nash County Public Schools, Edgecombe County Public Schools, and Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina—children ages 18 and under will receive nutritious, in-person meals all summer long. Selected sites will also receive resources to support literacy, enrichment activities, and physical activity opportunities.



We invite community members, churches, organizations, and caring neighbors to join us in creating safe, joyful, learning-rich spaces for our scholars this summer. Your involvement helps ensure every child has a place to grow, read, play, and feel supported.

For questions about sites or locations, please contact Donia Simmons at 252-985-4300 ext. 251.

FAMILY SERVICES



Family Navigation: Contact Sonja Person at sperson@depc.org to discover DEPC's new initiative to connect families with resources available to them through the partnership and in the community. This opportunity will work one-on-one with families to help them set goals and move forward from the challenges they are facing.

Three Circle of Parents Support Groups Start this Fall



Families are invited to join one of three supportive groups designed to provide connection, encouragement, and helpful resources.

Families Experiencing Special Needs Support Group serves parents of children ages birth to 18 with special needs. The group meets Mondays from 6:00–8:00 p.m. in a hybrid format, with activities available for all children in the family.

Family Connections Group is for families with children ages 0–8, with a focus on family, friend, and neighbor care and homeschooling families. The group meets twice monthly in the morning, with childcare provided.

Behavioral Health Family Support Group is a primarily virtual group for families of children ages 0–18 experiencing behavioral health challenges. The group meets twice each month.

These groups offer a welcoming space for families to connect, share experiences, and support one another. Contact DEPC for more information.



Kaleidoscope® Play & Learn

Caregivers and their children, under the age of 5, are invited to join us at Down East Partnership for Children in Rocky Mount, Spaulding Family Resource

Center in Spring Hope, or at Edgecombe County Memorial Library in Tarboro.

Spend time playing and discovering ways to help our children continue learning at home. **Contact Bethany Lambeth at blambeth@depc.org or 252-985-4300 ext. 270 to register.**



Triple P Briefs:

Schedule one-on-one coaching for topics of your choice. For more information, please contact **Abbi Mullens at amullens@depc.org**



NC Pre-K

NC Pre-K Applications are available in English and Spanish. Program locations are in private sites, public schools, and Head Start. Contact Family Services if you need help selecting a service provider. See the DEPC website for eligibility requirements and financial guidelines. There are no fees to families using this program.

HOW TO APPLY:

Applications may be accessed from the DEPC web page (<https://depc.org/child-care/pre-k-information-page/>) or picked up from 215 Lexington Street in Rocky Mount.

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 family income must fall below 85% of the state median income. Families are required to pay monthly 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 252-985-4300, ext. 220.

For continued updates to the Family Services Program or to register for programming, visit www.depc.org

Watermelon Salsa



Watermelon salsa is a healthy, low-calorie, and hydrating snack recommended by university cooperative extensions. Key, simple recipes often include diced watermelon, jalapeño, cilantro, lime juice, and red onion. It is high in vitamins and antioxidants, and it serves as an excellent, nutrient-dense alternative to traditional tomato salsa.

Ingredients

- 3 cups seeded watermelon, chopped
- 1/2 cup medium onion, chopped
- 1/2 cup red bell pepper, chopped
- 1 jalapeño pepper, seeded and minced
- 2 tablespoons fresh cilantro, chopped
- 2 tablespoons lime juice
- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil (optional)
- 1/4 teaspoon salt (optional, to taste)

Directions

1. Prepare the Ingredients: Chop the watermelon into small, uniform pieces. Finely chop the onion, bell pepper, and jalapeño.
2. Combine: In a medium bowl, combine the diced watermelon, onion, bell pepper, jalapeño, and cilantro.
3. Dress and Season: Add the lime juice and vegetable oil (if using) and stir gently to combine.
4. Chill: Refrigerate for at least 30-60 minutes before serving to allow the flavors to blend for 10 minutes.
5. Serve right away or cover and refrigerate up to 2 days. Measure with a food thermometer before serving.

Tips

For less heat, remove all seeds and white ribs from the jalapeño pepper. Serve with baked tortilla chips, over grilled fish, or with chicken.

USDA approved recipe - Florida Nutrition Ed

Henrietta Zalkind to Retire after 30+ Years of Leadership

After more than 30 years of visionary leadership, Henrietta Zalkind, Executive Director of the Down East Partnership for Children (DEPC), has announced her retirement at the end of 2026. Zalkind has served in this role since the organization's founding in 1993 and has been instrumental in shaping DEPC into a nationally recognized leader in early childhood education and family support.



Henrietta's leadership has always been about people, ensuring children and families feel seen, supported, and connected to real opportunity," said Dr. Trent Mohrbutter, DEPC's Board Chairman. "For more than 30 years, she built not just programs, but trust across this community. We are deeply grateful for her steadfast leadership, her unwavering commitment to children, and her friendship. She leaves this partnership in great shape, and now our work is to carry that legacy forward."

From the very beginning, Zalkind helped build DEPC with a clear and unwavering mission: to ensure that every child has the opportunity to grow up healthy, supported, and ready to succeed in school and in life. Under her leadership, the organization has expanded its reach and impact across Nash and Edgecombe counties, diversifying funding streams, strengthening community partnerships, and developing innovative programs that serve children from birth through age eight.

As DEPC looks toward the future, the organization remains committed to building on the strong foundation Zalkind has established. While challenges such as shifts in federal funding and the ongoing child care crisis continue to impact families, DEPC is poised to meet those challenges with resilience, innovation, and community support.

Save the date: An afternoon retirement reception will be held in her honor at DEPC on Wednesday, Nov. 4.

Need help choosing a child care provider?

It is one of the hardest decisions a parent will make. We can help you make an informed decision about quality, licensed care for your child.

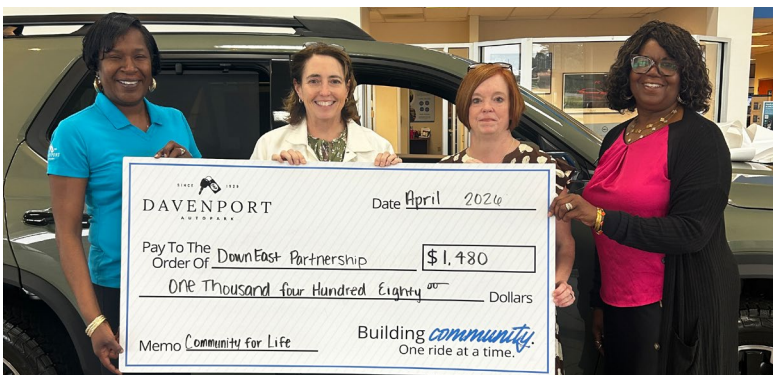




Down East Partnership for Children

215 Lexington Street | Rocky Mount, NC 27801
(252) 985-4300 | depc.org

Down East Partnership for Children is a nonprofit organization founded in 1993. 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.



Donor Spotlight: Davenport Autopark

Thank you to Davenport Autopark!

DEPC was selected as one of Davenport Autopark's Community Partners. "We love being a part of and giving back to our community. We believe in paying it forward to help our customers and our community as much as we can. The more good we put out in the world, the more the cycle of good will grow and build." - Neill Nelson, Davenport Autopark President.



NC SNAP-ED

This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-SNAP. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Mark Your Calendar

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

Circle of Parents: Three groups coming soon!

Kaleidoscope® Play & Learn Groups - Plan for the Fall: For children ages 0-5 at DEPC, Spring Hope and Tarboro!

DONATE TODAY!



SCAN QR CODE



Down East Partnership for Children

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Learn more at depc.org.



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