



# Durham County Early Childhood Update

Ileana Vink, MPH, RD, Early Childhood Coordinator

# Agenda

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History of County Early Childhood Coordinator position

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Early Childhood Action Plan

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Needs of Durham County families with young children

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Past early childhood initiatives and outcomes

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Emerging early childhood initiatives

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Future concerns and opportunities in early childhood

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Questions and BOCC input

# Background on Early Childhood Coordinator

- 2019: BOCC creates Early Childhood Coordinator position with community support following early childhood task force
- 2020-2022: Creation of Early Childhood Action Plan
- 2024: Coordinator begins managing Durham PreK contract
- Current tasks:
  - Facilitating internal (county) and external (community) coordination of early childhood initiatives
  - Supports county leadership to support and advise on early childhood issues as needed
  - Manages Durham County \$8 million+ contract with Durham PreK, ARPA contract with Durham Public Schools supporting PreK in Murray Massenberg, and contracts with early childhood supporting organizations discussed later

# Background on ECAP

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Created by a diverse group of caregivers, community members, and family- and child-serving agencies

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A plan to ensure Durham is a place where young children and their families can thrive

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A framework for eliciting community recommendations

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An educational tool: what are the community's priorities for collective action?

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A set of standards: how do we align community goals with community action?

# ECAP success story

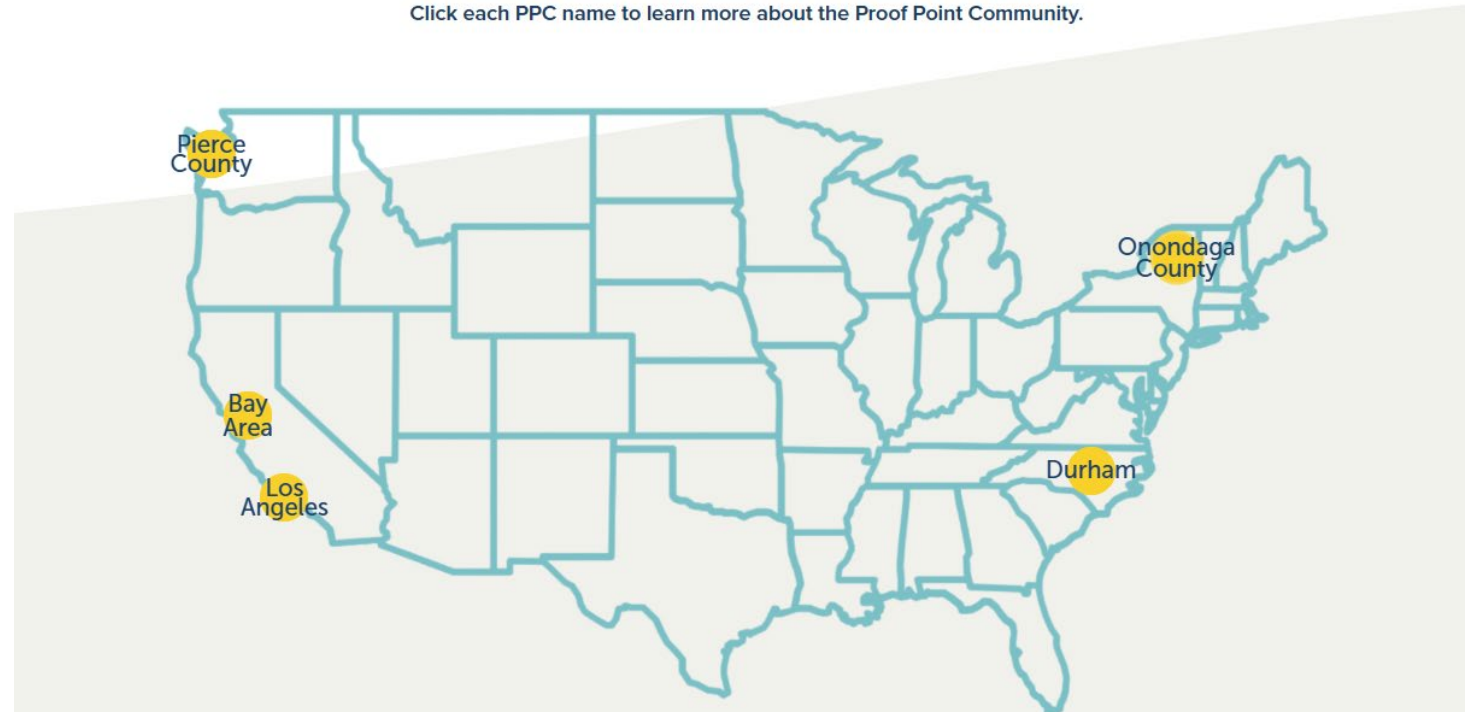


## Proof Point Communities

Building on its origins as a funder collaborative, PSP's Phase 2 Learning Community shifted its focus to direct community investment. Through five competitively selected PPCs, PSP advanced a multi-year, shared-learning model in which parents, pediatricians, community leaders, and funders co-created governance structures, strategic priorities, investment strategies, and innovative approaches.

Rooted in local wisdom, each community engaged in a yearlong planning and co-design process to strengthen family partnership and develop tailored implementation plans for 2023–2025. Together, these communities collaborated to transform pediatric primary care in ways that promoted early relational health and children's social and emotional development, while sharing innovations and lessons learned to drive sustainable change across the field.

Click each PPC name to learn more about the Proof Point Community.



# Current needs of Durham County children



\*Percentage is not reported if it is greater than 95% or less than 5%

For complete data notes and sources, visit [ncchild.org](https://ncchild.org)  
Contact Neil Harrington at [neil@ncchild.org](mailto:neil@ncchild.org) with any questions.




NC Pathways to Grade-Level Reading  
Measures of Success. Learn more at:  
[buildthefoundation.org/pathways](https://buildthefoundation.org/pathways)

**NC Child**  
The Voice for North Carolina's Children

# DCo ECAP Implementation Funds: FY25

- Book Harvest
- Diaper Bank of NC
- El Centro Hispano
- Equity Before Birth
- Exchange Family Center
- Families Moving Forward
- H.E.A.R.T.S.
- ISLA
- MAAME
- Nurturing Durham helpline
- Rainbow Collective for Change
- Reach Out and Read
- Refugee Community Partnership

Highlights:  
outputs and outcomes from  
FY25 Early Childhood  
investments



# Healthy growth and development

**140,000** diapers

distributed by **Diaper Bank of NC** to Durham community partners

**50**

**pregnant and postpartum people**

who received weekly fresh produce and nutrition education from **MAAME's** First Foods program

**30**

**pregnant and parenting teens**

who received education and support from **H.E.A.R.T.S.**

**484**

**young children**

whose classrooms received social emotional literacy toolkits from **Exchange Family Center** to support early relational health

# Learning in the community

**259** rising kindergarteners

received Ready for School guides and backpacks from **Book Harvest**

**100%**

**of Parents**

whose children participated in **El Centro's** program believe the program has supported their children in developing basic literacy skills

**102**

**Shelter residents**

who received enrichment workshops while residing at **Families Moving Forward**

**839**

**Hours**

of multilingual service navigation support provided by **Refugee Community Partnership**

DCo ARPA  
investment:  
organizations  
serving young  
children

- Aya Community Wellness
- Breastfeed Durham
- Center for Child and Family Health
- Children's Home Society
- Diaper Bank of North Carolina
- MAAME
- Museum of Life and Science

DCo ECAP  
Implementation  
Funds FY26

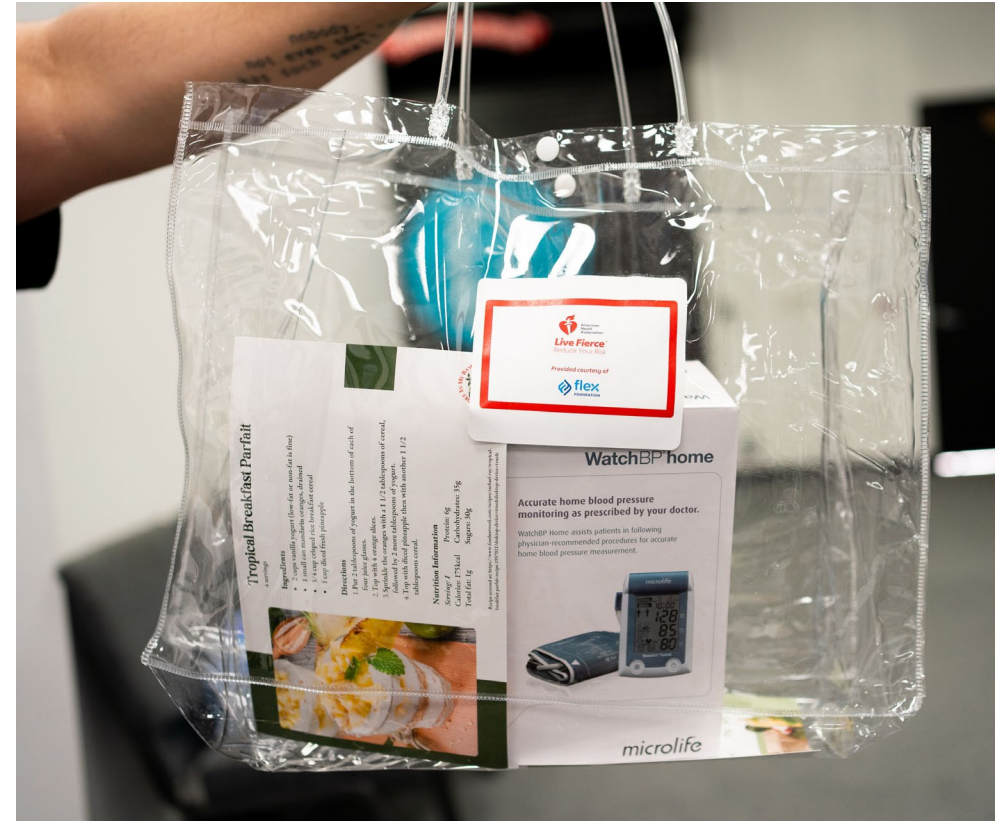
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- Refugee Community Partnership
- THRIVE NC



# Basic needs

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# Maternal and infant health

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Early relational  
health



# Early literacy

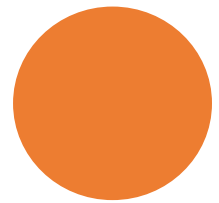
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# Service navigation

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Highlighting family friendly businesses



# Community based participatory research

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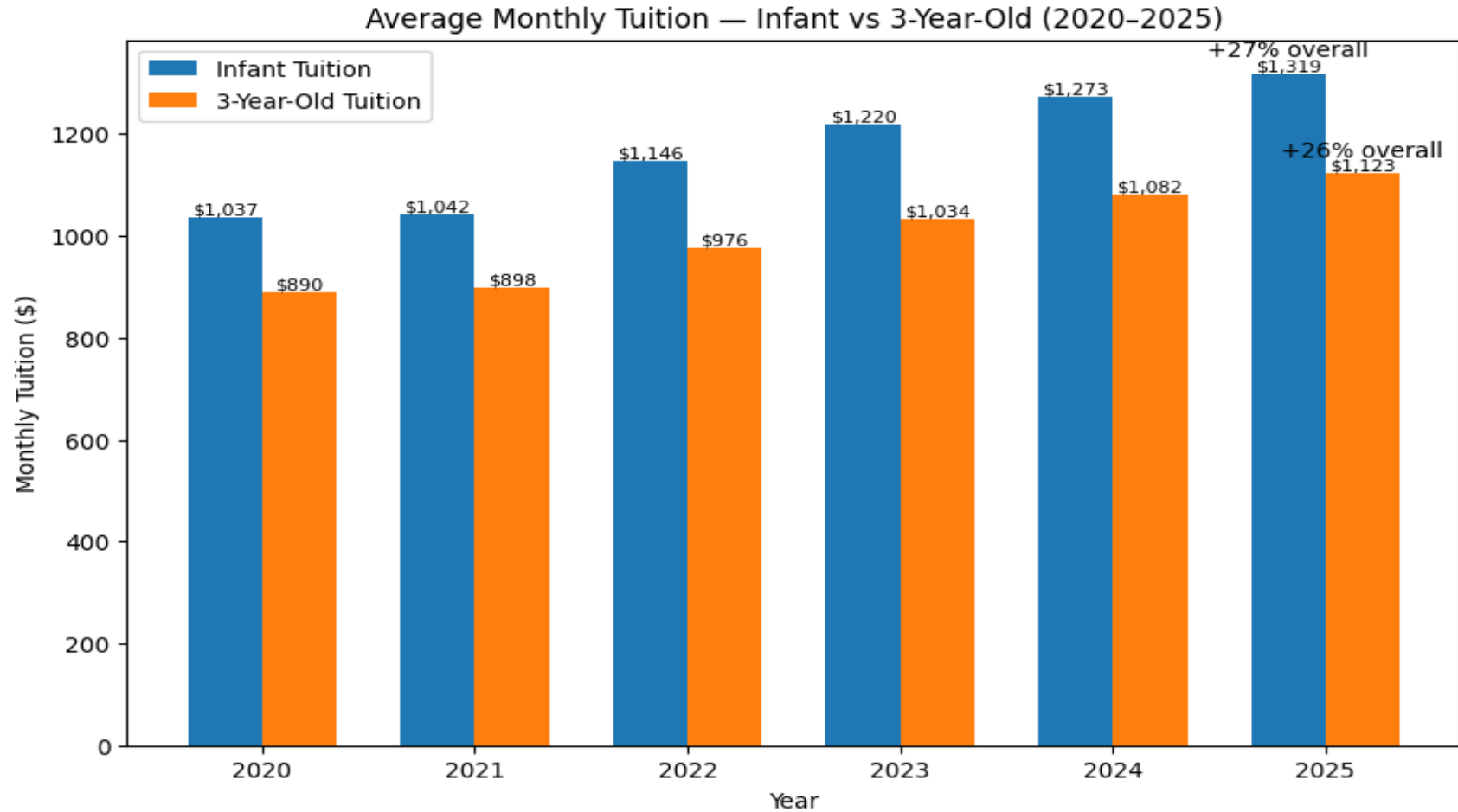
# Challenges in ECAP implementation

- Risk of parents/caregivers losing Medicaid, SNAP
- Increased cost of basic needs
- Infant and maternal health data showing concerning trends
- Childcare supply, staff, affordability, and quality

# Durham County needs: childcare

- 73% of Durham children under age 6 have all parents working
- Families are consistently seeking care that they cannot easily find
- Infant and toddler care continues to be the most limited
- Increasing demand and limited supply in growth corridors
- Family child care homes are disappearing

# Child care costs



DCo ARPA  
Early  
Childhood  
investment:  
Early Care and  
Education

- Early Years- Build Babies Durham
- Early Years- Building the Business Side of Childcare
- DPS Title I



## Survey Feedback: *What the Scholarship Meant*

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“Having a scholarship meant that we could afford our day-to-day, and have more opportunities to save money for our children's future costs (like their college education, enrichment opportunities, etc). We are so grateful for this program and for this opportunity.”

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“I was suddenly a single parent . I was working towards certification for my job field and was able to complete the training and get a great job. Without the scholarship program, I would not have been able to do so.”

# Survey Feedback: Budgeting

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“It helped me to be able to pay my student loans.”

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“I had another child so it helped with diapers, formula and a car payment.”

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“It's nice to be able to cover electricity and water bills on time.”



# Durham PreK goals

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Universal, high quality system

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Family engagement

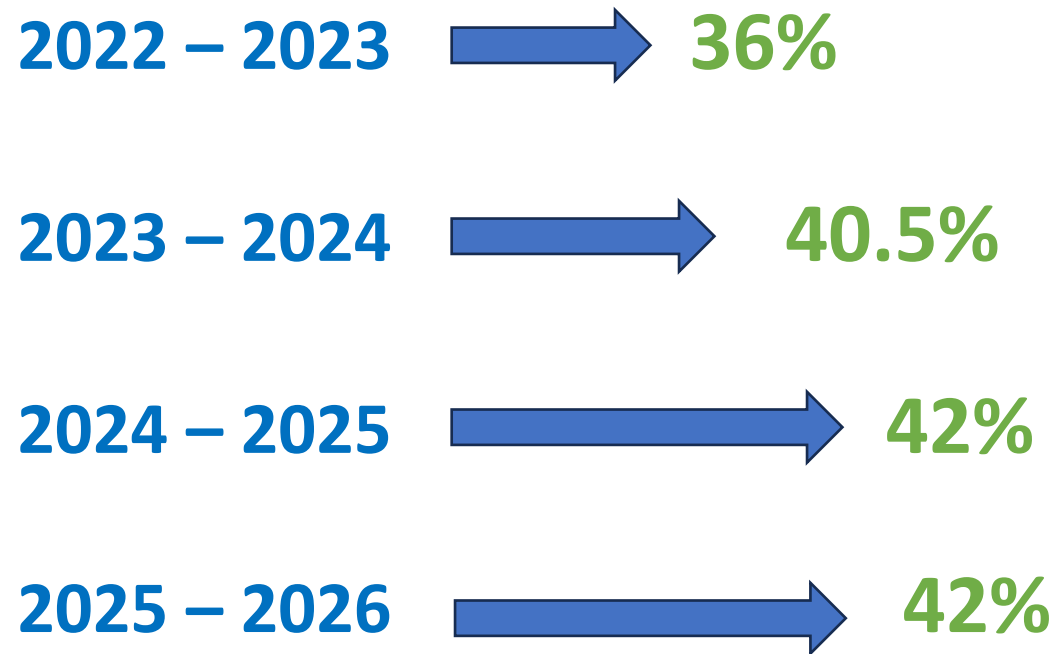
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Kindergarten readiness

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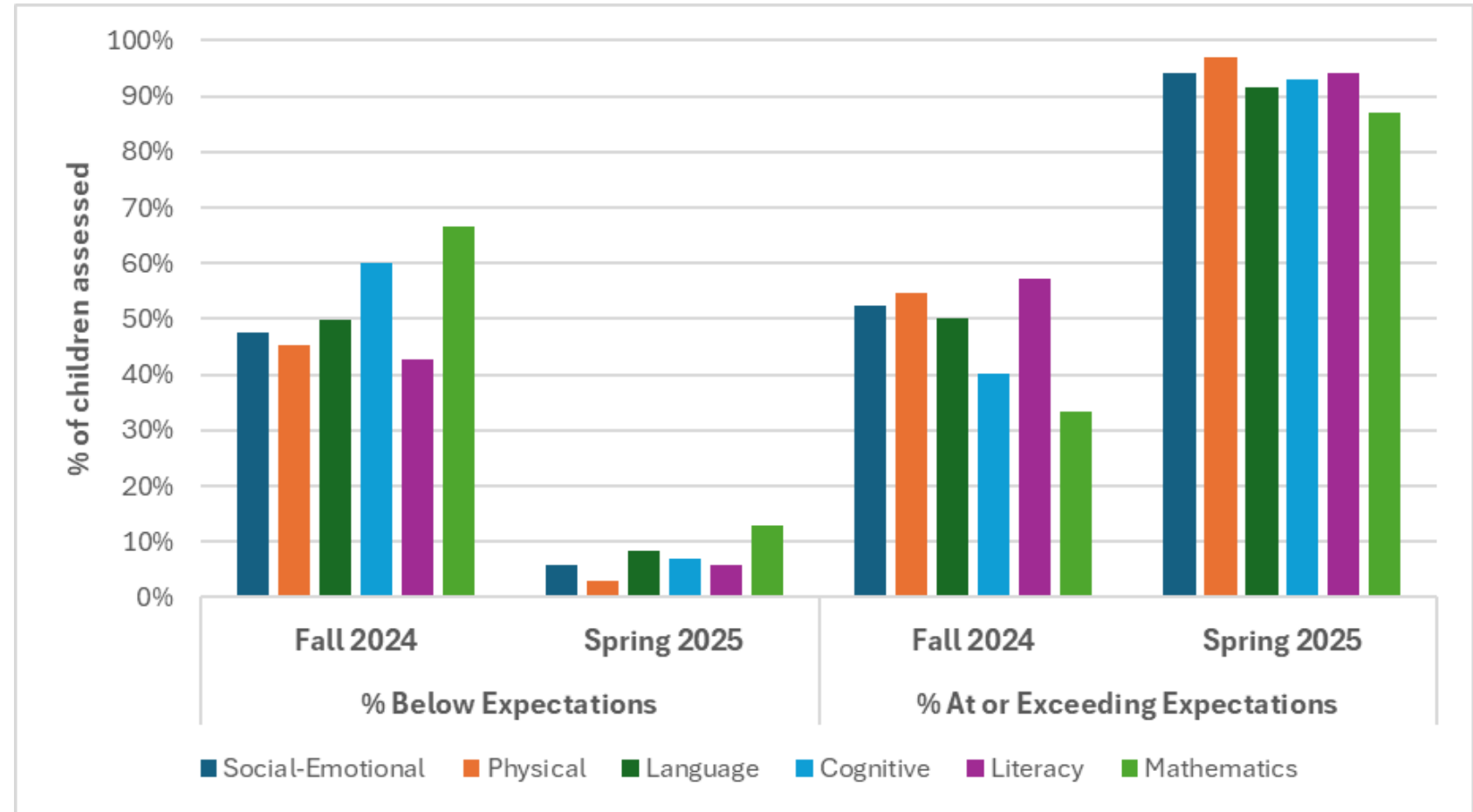
Capacity building

# Durham PreK- reach



# Durham PreK- outcomes

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# FUNDING IN 2025-2026

## Problem

Original  
2025-2026  
budget of  
\$7,373,029



## Solution

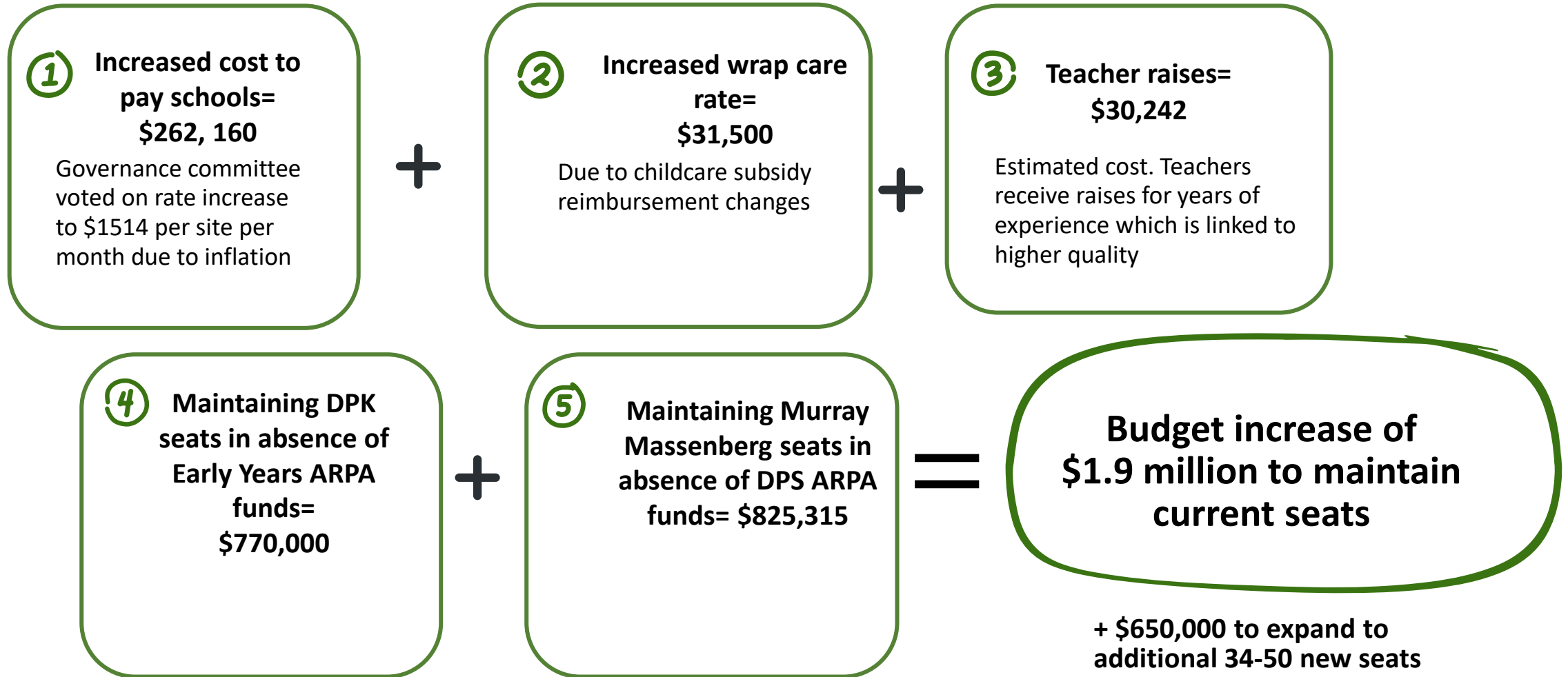
Due to county  
provided ARPA  
funds, Early Years  
was able to  
reallocate  
\$770,000 to DPK



## Outcomes

- No cuts to locally funded seats
- Implemented base salary support payment
- Increased teacher support payments
- Preserved wrap care scholarships for before and after school
- Preserved bonus for instructional staff
- Did **NOT** provide an increase in reimbursement rates

# MAINTAINING DPK IN 2026-2027



# Success story: Workforce Development

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## Pre-apprentices

- 6 week program
- NC Early Childhood credential
- CPR/First Aid
- Job shadowing and job search support

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## Certificate apprentices

- 1 year program
- Concludes with a preschool or infant/toddler certificate
- Full time paid employment with bonuses and wage increase

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## Associate degree apprentices

- 2 year program
- Complete associates degree
- Full time paid employment with bonuses and wage increase

# Opportunities in ECAP implementation

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- Collaboration between coordinators
- Coordination with Benefits Access Coalition on Medicaid, SNAP, WIC, tax credits and saving accounts
- Using Early Childhood Action Plan to leverage partnerships and funding
- Exploring private sector/supports for families with children age 0-3
- Continuing to support families through Durham PreK

Questions and  
recommendations?

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