



# Overview of Early Care & Education in Buncombe County

*Presented by*

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Early Childhood Education and Development Committee

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# Funding Strategy Series



## Session 1: Overview

August 6, 2024

A look at early care & education in Buncombe County, including - licensure, quality, data & context

## Session 2: Funding

September 3, 2024

How early care & education is paid for and impacts of Buncombe's Early Childhood Fund

## Session 3: Considerations

October 1, 2024

A review of various approaches to investing in early learning and impacts associated with each

## Session 4: Funding Strategy

November 5, 2023

Discussion of a funding strategy for the Early Childhood Fund going forward



# Funding Strategy Series

## Session 1: Overview

A look at early care & education in Buncombe County, including - licensure, quality, data & context

### AGENDA

- Child care regulation in NC
- Child care licensing
- Star ratings
- Child care quality over time
- Licensed slots, enrollment & population
- Comparison to other counties
- Workforce
- Funded provider survey results



# Who regulates child care in NC?

The State of North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS), Division of Child Development and Early Education (**DCDEE**) is responsible for:

1. Ensuring the **health and safety** of children in child care programs;
2. Promoting **quality** child care by implementing evidenced-based standards; and
3. **Increasing access** to quality child care to families and children across North Carolina



# To ensure child health and safety, DCDEE:

- Licenses, monitors and provides technical assistance to child care programs
- Ensures comprehensive Criminal Background Checks with all individuals who work in licensed or regulated child care programs and other social and human services programs
- Supports the NC Child Care Commission which has responsibility to create, amend or repeal rules to implement Child Care Law



# To promote quality child care, DCDEE:

- Evaluates teacher and administrator education to determine qualification for different positions in child care programs
- Administers the NC Prekindergarten (NC Pre-K) program
- Funds the statewide Child Care Resource and Referral system which provides evidence-based technical assistance, professional development, coaching and compensation supports for early childhood professionals
- Works with a variety of early childhood partners to provide training, coaching, and evaluation for early childhood professionals across the state
- Provides state funding to NC Partnership for Children/Smart Start



# To increase access to care, DCDEE:

- Administers North Carolina's Subsidized Child Care Assistance program
- Provides parents a web-based tool to search for quality child care programs
- Collaborates with early childhood partners and homeless service providers to address the need for child care for families experiencing homelessness or temporary housing arrangements
- Administers NC's Child Care and Development Fund federal block grant



# Child Care Licensing

- Child care arrangements that meet the definition of child care are required to be licensed by DCDEE.
- The purpose of child care licensing is to ensure the safety and developmental well-being of children while in out-of-home care.
- Child care regulations reduce the risk of predictable harm to children while in child care.
- Regulations provide basic consumer protection.
- Potential operators must comply with established child care rules prior to the issuance of a license.





# How is “child care” defined in NC?

- Child care = A program or arrangement where three or more children less than 13 years old, who do not reside where the care is provided, receive care on a regular basis of at least once per week for more than 4 hours but less than 24 hours per day from persons other than their guardians or full-time custodians, or from persons not related to them by birth, marriage, or adoption
- Care for children that does not meet this definition is not required to be licensed by the State of NC



# Star Ratings

- Star rated licenses allow providers to voluntarily demonstrate quality
- North Carolina uses a Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS), which has a 1-5 star scale.
- 1 Star or Religious Sponsored: Issued to child care programs that meet minimum licensing requirements but choose not to be assessed for higher voluntary standards
- 2 – 5 Stars: issued to child care operators who voluntarily meet enhanced standards of child care requirements



# Minimum Requirements

- In operation for a minimum of six months (or temporary/provisional)
- Providers have CPR and First Aid training, 16 hours of other mandatory training, and have passed criminal background checks to receive DCDEE Qualifying Letter
- Sanitation inspection - must be inspected at least annually by a County Environmental Health Specialist, includes procedures related to diaper changing, food service and prep, storage of chemicals and medicine as well as general sanitation
- Fire inspection - must have annual fire inspection by County Fire Marshal, includes fire resistance & protection, egress, emergency planning



# How are points earned?

Star ratings are assigned based on points in the following categories:

- **Program Standards:** Based on environmental rating scales that measure features in a classroom such as schedule, materials and space. The three assessments used in the state of North Carolina are the ITERS-R (ages birth-2.5) the ECERS-R (ages 2.5-5), and the FCCERS-R, which is designed to assess family childcare programs.
- **Education Standards:** Based on the education level and early childhood experience of staff (credential, certification, coursework degrees, and years of experience)
- **Quality Point:** Additional program or education criteria for an extra point (e.g. all lead teachers have completed an A.A.S. or higher in early childhood education/development, reduced staff/child ratios)



# Providers By Star Rating (0-5)

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>
1 Star	10	9	10	9	10	9
2 Star	1	1	0	0	0	0
3 Star	15	16	18	13	13	12
4 Star	15	17	19	19	17	19
5 Star	45	43	42	47	46	44
Temporary	2	2	0	2	3	4
Provisional	2	3	2	0	1	0
GS 110-106	5	4	4	4	4	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>93</b>



# High Quality Programs

	<u>2024</u>
1 Star	9
2 Star	0
3 Star	12
4 Star	19
5 Star	44
Temporary	4
Provisional	0
GS 110-106	5
TOTAL	93

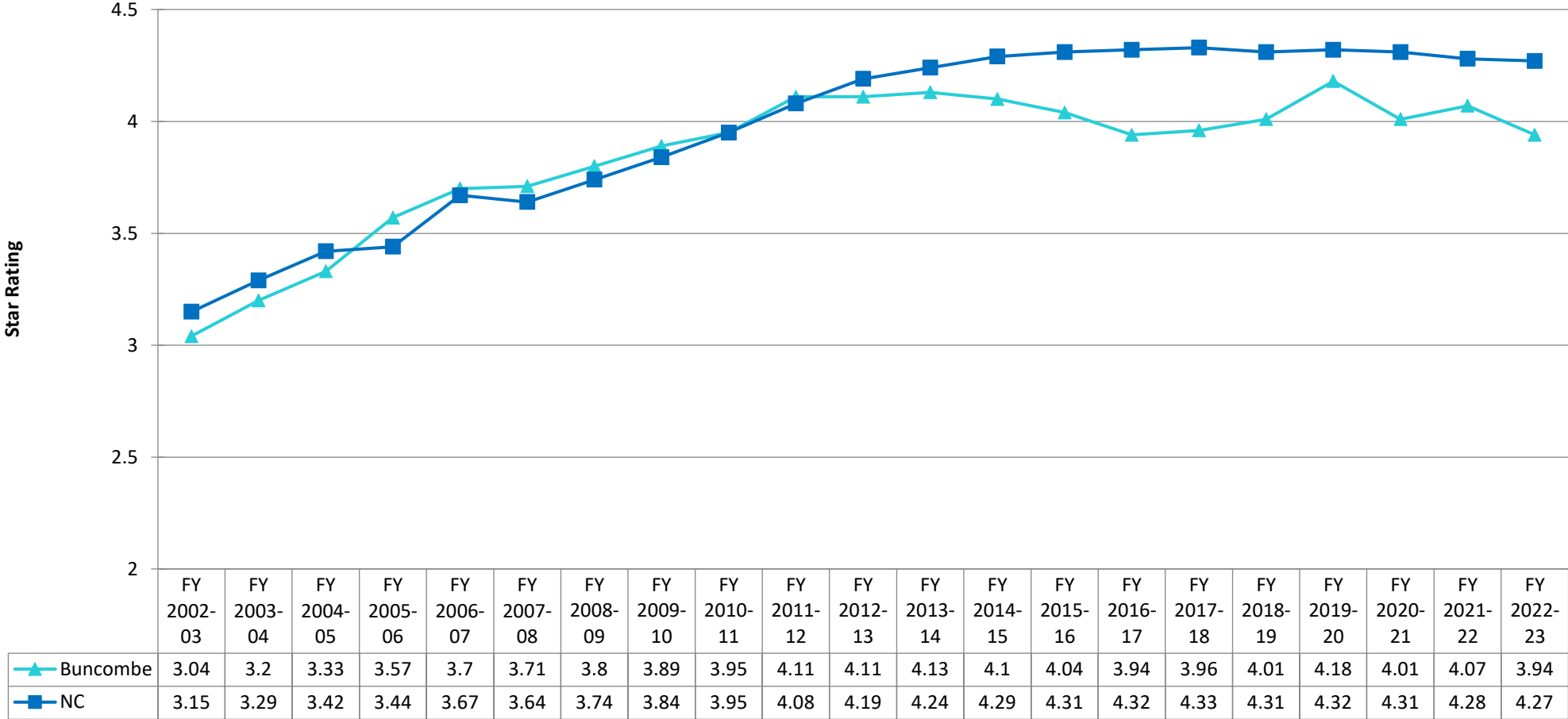
Excluding the centers that do not participate in the voluntary rating (requesting higher than 1 star or exempt from star ratings):

- 84% (or 63 out of 75) are 4 or 5 star rated
- 4 and 5 star rated programs are considered high quality in NC

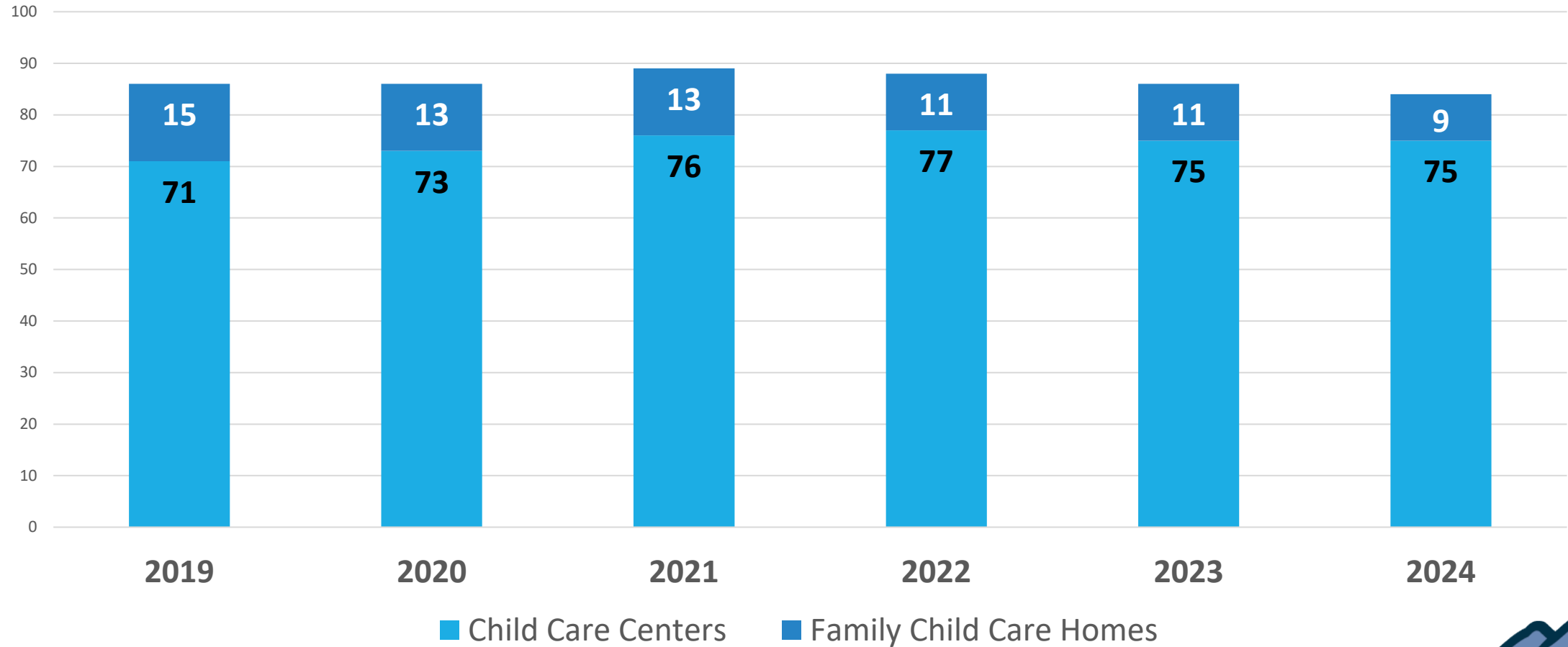


# Child Care Quality Over Time (0-5)

Average Star Rating - All Children



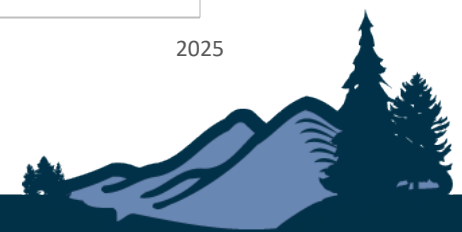
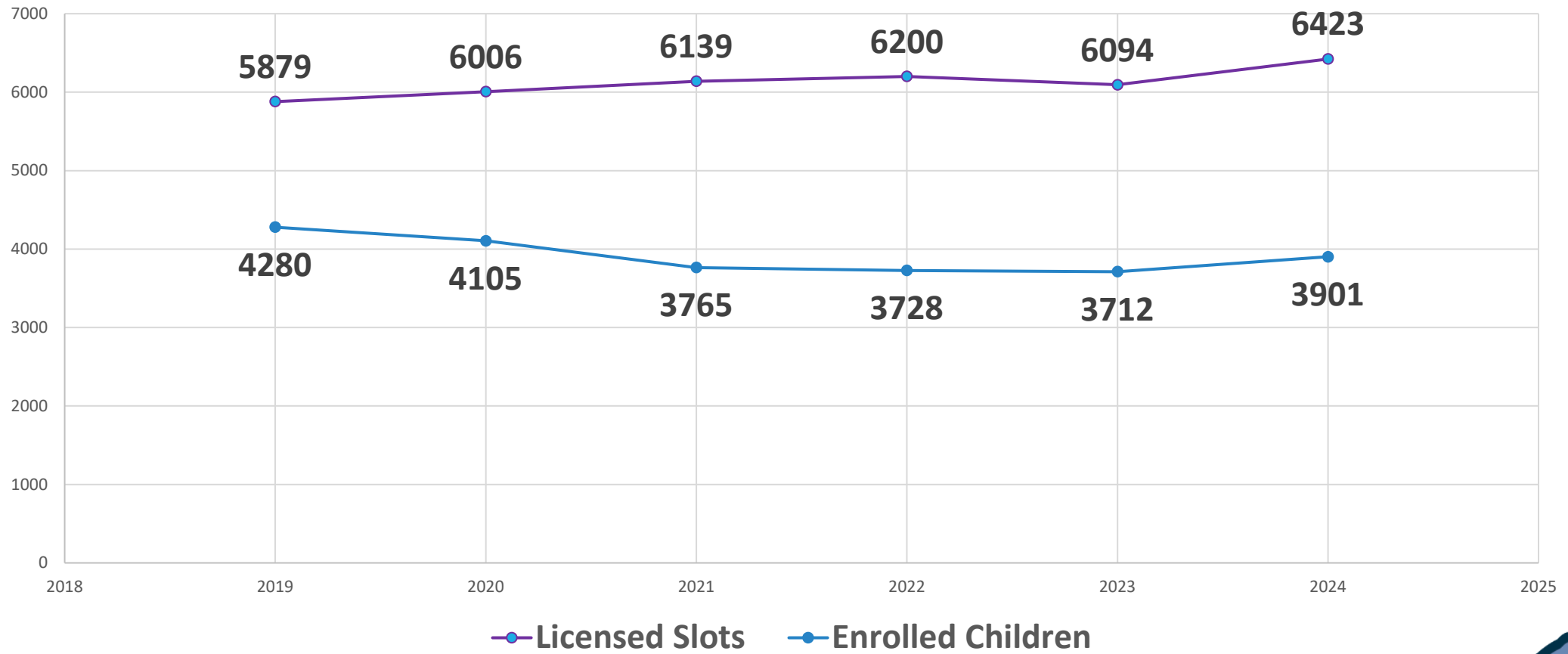
# Types of licensed programs (0-5)





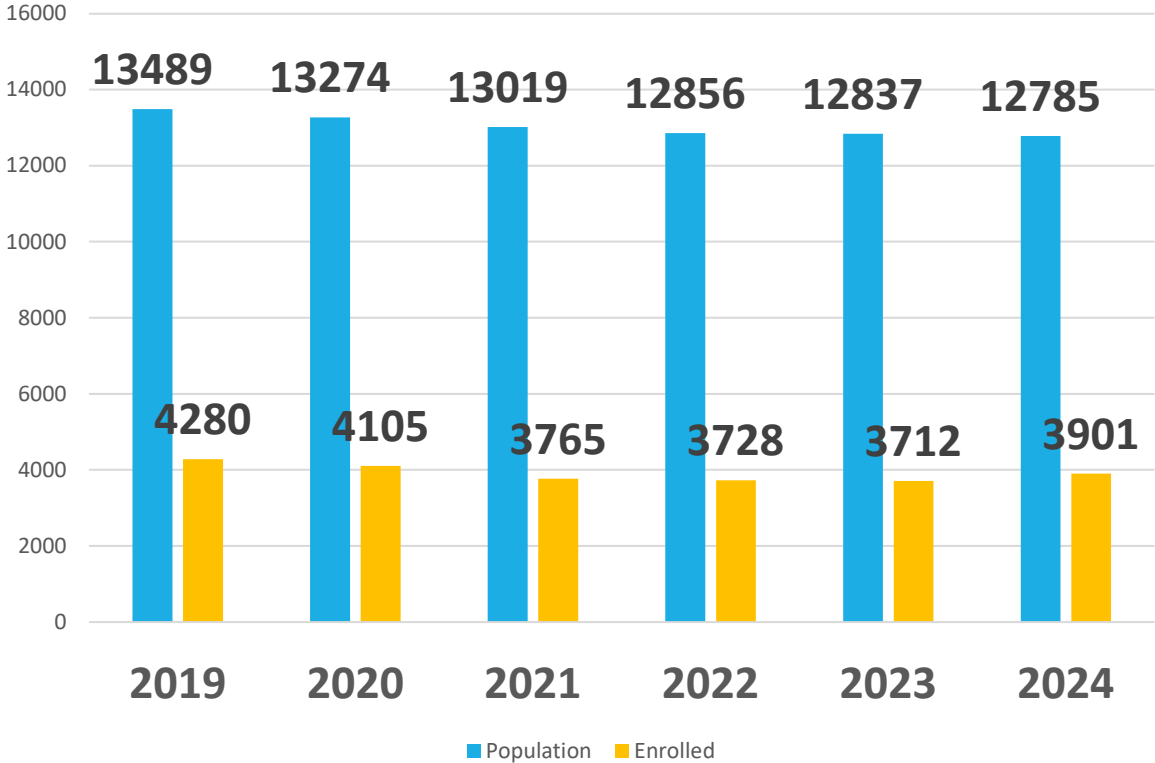
# Licensed slots and Enrollment

Slots vs Enrollment

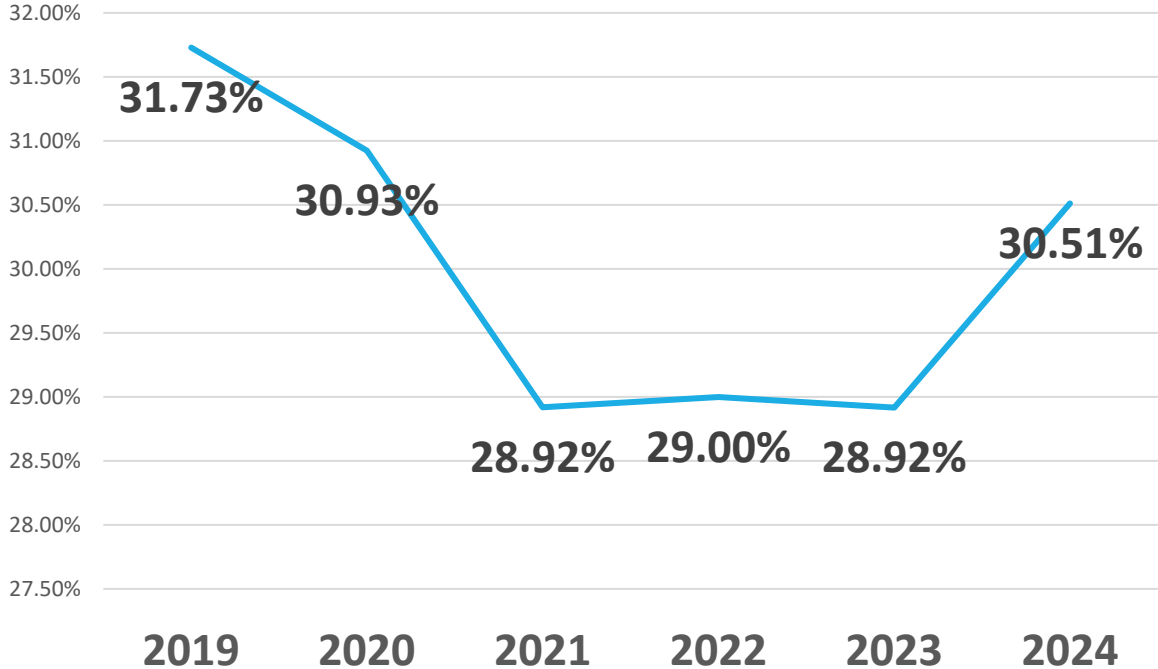


# Children in Licensed Care

### Population vs Enrolled



### Percent of Population Enrolled

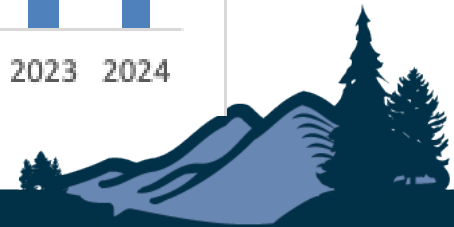
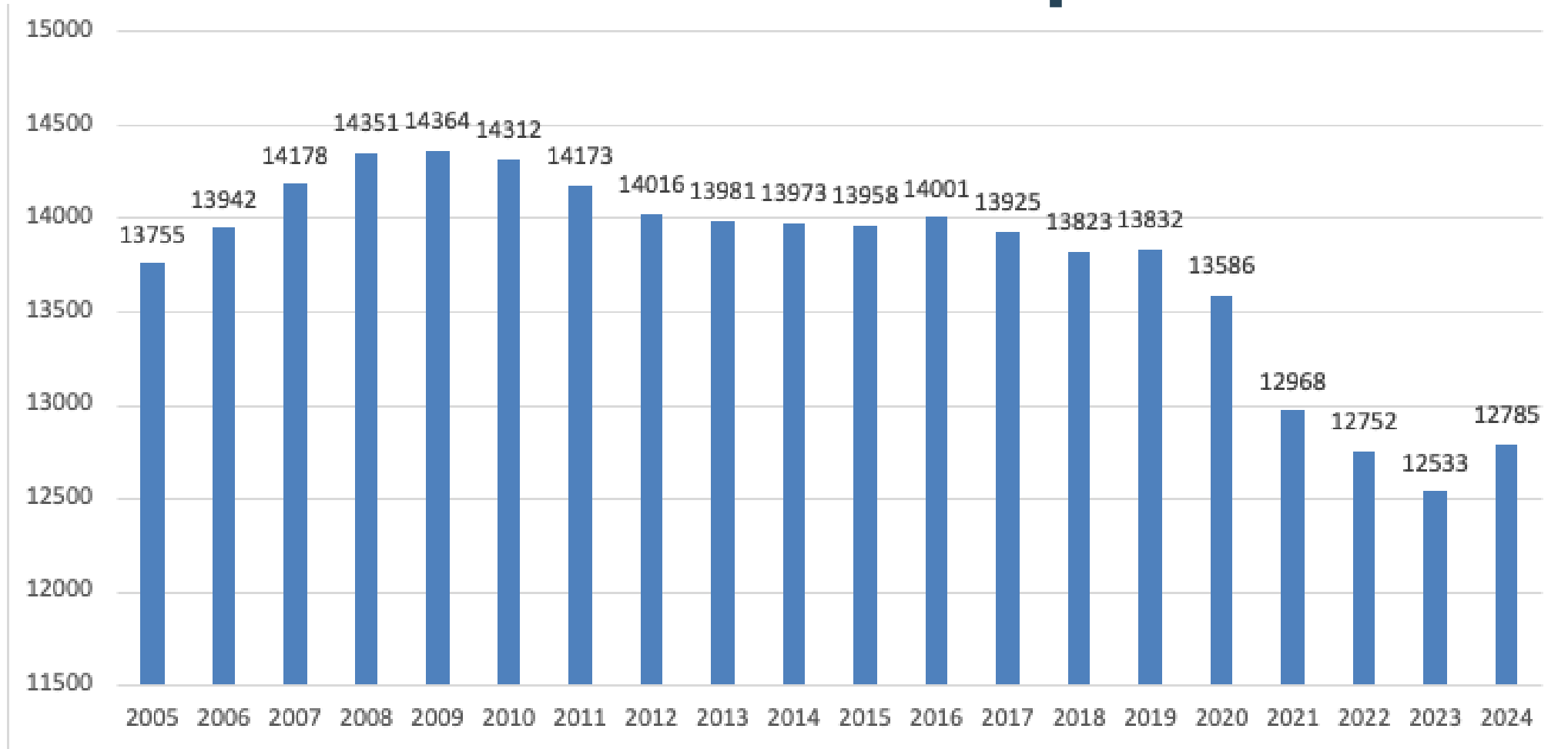


# Enrollment Per Age (0-5)

	<u>2024 population</u>	<u>2024 enrolled</u>	<u>Percent of population enrolled</u>
<b>Infants</b>	2410	182	7.6%
<b>1 Year Olds</b>	2393	348	14.5%
<b>2 Year Olds</b>	2411	668	27.7%
<b>3 Year Olds</b>	2374	789	33.2%
<b>4 Year Olds – 5 Year Old (PS)</b>	3197	1914	59.9%
<b>TOTAL</b>	12785	3901	30.5%



# Buncombe Child Population



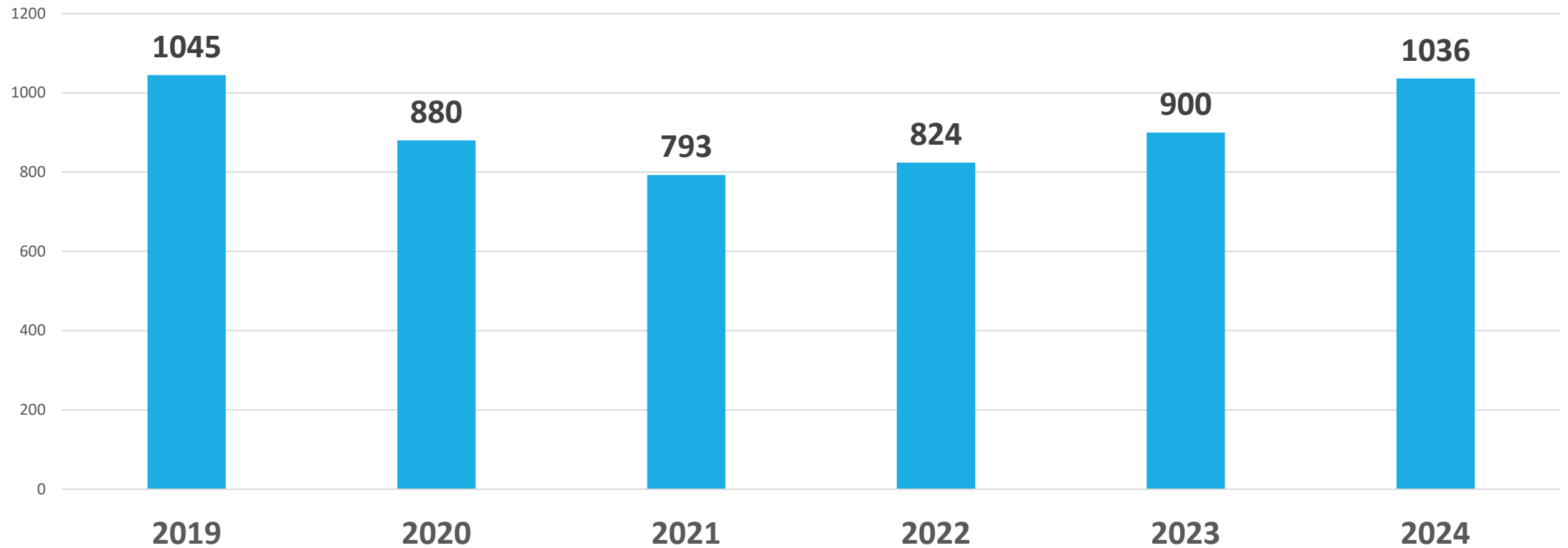
# Comparison to Other Counties

	<u>% of 0-5 population enrolled in child care</u>	<u>2024 0-5 PS population</u>	<u>% change in 0-5 PS population, 2019-2024</u>
Buncombe County	30.51%	12,785	-5.22%
Cabarrus County	26.01%	14,698	9.26%
Catawaba County	30.45%	8,907	-1.21%
Cumberland County	23.91%	27,009	-3.44%
Durham County	29.58%	21,980	-3.44%
Forsyth County	22.27%	23,786	1.07%
Guilford County	29.26%	31,550	-2.98%
Henderson County	23.97%	5,557	-2.06%
Madison County	17.92%	1,021	-4.76%
McDowell County	32.06%	2,168	-8.98%
Mecklenburg County	25.65%	77,933	-0.27%
New Hanover County	33.91%	11,644	-1.62%
Wake County	35.39%	69,248	1.58%
Statewide	13.67%	1,283,416	1.07%



# Workforce

## Workforce Serving 0-5 (PS)



# Funded Provider Surveys

<u>Slot Information</u>	<u>Licensed Slots</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>	<u>Wait List</u>
Beginning of Year Total	1034	782	3514
End of Year Total	1253	982	2508
Difference	219	200	-1006

<u>Workforce Info</u>	<u>Lead Teachers</u>	<u>Asst Teachers</u>	<u>Lead Vacancies</u>	<u>Asst Vacancies</u>
Beginning of Year Total:	84	95	14	21.5
End of Year Total:	93	106	5	18
Difference:	9	11	-9	-3.5



# STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

	<u>American Indian or Alaska Native</u>	<u>Asian</u>	<u>Black or African American</u>	<u>Hispanic or Latino</u>	<u>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>Multi- race</u>	<u>Total*</u>
Beginning of Year Total:	2	9	158	77	2	576	65	889
End of Year Total:	1	12	230	84	5	598	69	999
Difference:	-1	3	72	7	3	22	4	

\*Total may be duplicated because students may be identified in more than one category





# Population Demographics vs. Enrolled Demographics

<u>Buncombe County 0-5 (PS) Population</u>	<u>Percent of Population</u>	<u>Beginning of Year Enrollment</u>	<u>End of Year Enrollment</u>
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.52%	0.22%	0.10%
Asian	1.73%	1.01%	1.20%
Black or African American	7.77%	17.77%	23.02%
Other	9.21%		
White	80.77%	64.79%	59.86%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander		0.22%	0.50%
Multi-race		7.31%	6.91%



# Next Session

## Session 2: Funding

September 3, 2024

How early care & education is paid for and impacts of Buncombe's Early Childhood Fund

- In the news: Funding cuts
- Child care funding – Public & private sources
- Impacts of Buncombe County's Early Childhood Fund, 2019-2024

