



Resources for families with young children in North Carolina

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CCR&R Council
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Looking for information and resources that may be available to help your child and you?

Your local child care resource and referral (CCR&R) agency can refer you to a wide array of child care, child development, and financial assistance resources, services, and programs available in your county (see back panel for contact information).

This brochure is intended to highlight information about: 1) financial assistance programs to help you support your child and family; 2) child development, developmental milestones, and developmental services; 3) children's healthy social-emotional development; and 4) services to support families with children experiencing homelessness.

Financial Assistance Programs

There are an array of programs designed to help with family expenses. Common eligibility criteria for these programs are listed below:

Residency

- Your family must live in North Carolina.
- You must apply for services in the county where you live.

Citizenship

- One of the following citizenship criteria must be met:
 - You or your child must be a U.S. Citizen; or
 - You or your child must be a legal U.S. Non-Citizen (legally residing in U.S.).

Income

- Income eligibility is based on monthly gross (before taxes) income and family size.

TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE TO NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF)

North Carolina's *Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)* program, called *Work First*, is a public assistance program that offers cash assistance and employment services to very low income families with children under age 18 living in the home.

Work First provides parents with short-term training and other services to help them become and stay employed, become free of long-term dependence on assistance, and self-sufficient. It includes:

Work First Employment Services provides recipients with basic education, skills training, and supportive services such as child care, counseling, transportation, and job referrals.

Work First Family Assistance provides cash assistance and Medicaid coverage to families with minor children. In cases involving the absence of a parent from the home, a referral is sent to the State Child Support Enforcement Agency to locate the absent parent, establish paternity/maternity, and set up a plan of support.

For more information about Work First, call 1-800-662-7030. Application must be made in person at your county Department of Social Services (DSS) office: <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/dss/local-county-social-services-offices>

CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE

North Carolina's Health Check (Medicaid for Children) and *NC Health Choice* (CHIP) are free or low-cost health insurance options for children and teens up to age 19 (*although NC children in foster care on their 18th birthday may have Medicaid coverage until age 26*).

NC Health Check and Health Choice benefits include: well-child checkups, medicines, sick visits, dental care, immunizations, hospital care, lab

tests, counseling, therapies, surgeries, medical equipment and supplies and vision and hearing care.

FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES

In North Carolina, the *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program* (SNAP) is called *Food and Nutrition Services* (FNS) and is sometimes known as "food stamps." The purpose of *FNS* (a federal food assistance program) is to end hunger and improve nutrition and health by enabling low-income families to purchase the food they need for a nutritionally adequate diet. Monthly allotments are issued through Electronic Benefit Transfer cards (EBT cards).

Additional eligibility requirements regarding Household Composition include: Individuals living together, but purchasing and preparing their meals separately, may participate in FNS as separate households. In some cases, individuals must participate in FNS as one household even though they purchase and prepare their meals separately (e.g. individuals under 22 living with a parent; children under age 18 under the parental control of an adult living in the home; or two unmarried adults living in the same home who are parents of a mutual child).

For more information about *NC Health Check*, *NC Health Choice*, and *Food and Nutrition Services* and to learn if you are eligible, call 1-800-662-7030; contact your county DSS office: <https://www2.ncdhhs.gov/dss/local/>; or to apply online, visit North Carolina ePass: <https://epass.nc.gov/CitizenPortal/application.do>.

LOW INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIHEAP)

The *Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program* (LIHEAP) is a federally funded program that provides a one-time cash payment to help eligible families pay their heating bills. The program assists



low income renters or homeowners to help heat their homes by making direct payments to their gas or electric utility companies. Families can apply for *LIHEAP* at their local Department of Social Services between December 1 and January 31 or until funds are exhausted. For more information about *LIHEAP*, call 1-800-662-703 or contact your DSS office: <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/dss/local-county-social-services-offices>

WOMEN, INFANTS AND CHILDREN (WIC)

Women, Infants and Children, commonly known as *WIC*, is the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children funded by the United States Department of Agriculture. *WIC* provides funds to support the purchase of healthy foods, referrals to health care providers, breast feeding support, and tips on good nutrition for you and your child.

WIC is for pregnant women; breastfeeding women who have had a baby in the last 12 months; women who have had a baby in the last 6 months; and children birth to age 5.

To qualify for *WIC* you must be at risk nutritionally. Nutritional risk can be determined by a nutritionist or other health professional. Factors used to identify nutritional risk include, but are not limited to, height and weight, blood test for low iron, health history, and diet history.

Note: A person who currently receives Medicaid, Work First, or FNS automatically meets the income eligibility guidelines for WIC.

For more information about *WIC*, call 1-800-662-7030 or visit <http://www.nutritionnc.com/wic/>.

Child Development & Developmental Milestones

Child development refers to how children grow which includes physical, social-emotional, cognitive, and language development. Developmental milestones mark the abilities and behaviors that most children display by certain ages -- like taking a first step, smiling at people, and waving goodbye and hello. How your child learns, speaks, and plays offers important clues about your child's development. The chart below highlights developmental milestones for children from birth to five.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have an array of free resources and a free app for tracking child development milestones available on their website: <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones-app.html>.

Children with Developmental Delays

Developmental milestones are not set in stone....in their earliest years of life, the pace of development varies from child to child. However, if you have a question about your child's development, developmental screenings are ways that professionals can determine if your child is reaching developmental milestones as expected or if your child would benefit from additional support.

Your Child's Early Development is a Journey

Check off the milestones your child has reached and share your child's progress with the doctor at every visit.

6 MONTHS

- Copies sounds
- Begins to sit without support
- Likes to play with others, especially parents
- Responds to own name
- Strings vowels together when babbling ("ah," "eh," "oh")

12 MONTHS (1 YEAR)

- Uses simple gestures such as shaking head for "no" or waving "bye bye"
- Copies gestures
- Responds to simple spoken requests

18 MONTHS (1 1/2 YEARS)

- Says "mama" and "dada"
- Pulls up to stand
- Says sentences with 2 to 4 words
- Gets excited when with other children
- Says several single words
- Walks alone
- Knows what ordinary things are for; for example, telephone, brush, spoon
- Plays simple pretend, such as feeding a doll
- Points to show others something interesting

2 YEARS

- Follows simple instructions
- Kicks a ball
- Points to things or pictures when they're named

3 YEARS

- Copies adults and friends (like running when other children run)
- Climbs well
- Carries on a conversation using 2 to 3 sentences
- Plays make-believe with dolls, animals and people
- Shows affection for friends without prompting

4 YEARS

- Hops and stands on one foot for up to 2 seconds
- Would rather play with other children than alone
- Tells stories
- Draws a person with 2 to 4 body parts
- Plays cooperatively

These are just a few of many important milestones to look for. For more complete checklists by age visit www.cdc.gov/ActEarly or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.

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Developmental screening, which should be happening at each well child visit, can identify early intervention supports that will help your child thrive.

If you have concerns or questions about your child's development and are interested in developmental screenings, contact your child's pediatrician, your local Health Department, Children's Developmental Services Agency (CDSA), or (for children 3 years and older) the Exceptional Children Department of your local school system. For additional information and resources for children of any ages, contact the ECAC (Exceptional Children's Assistance Center).

CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES AGENCIES

The North Carolina Early Intervention Branch (NCEI) is a part of the *N.C. Division of Public Health*. It is the lead agency for the *N.C. Infant-Toddler Program* (ITP). The *Infant-Toddler Program* provides supports and services for families and their children, birth to three who have special needs. Sixteen *Children's Developmental Services Agencies* (CDSAs) across North Carolina work with local service providers to support families in helping their children succeed. A child and family may receive supports and services if the child is under three years old and has certain levels of *developmental delays* or an *established condition*.

A child can have a *developmental delay* in one or more of the following areas:

- thinking and learning
- moving, seeing, hearing, and health
- understanding and using sounds, gestures, and words
- responding to and developing relationships
- taking care of one's self when doing things like feeding or dressing

A child with an *established condition* has a diagnosed health condition that will very likely cause a developmental delay. This includes:

- genetic disorders, such as Down Syndrome or cystic fibrosis
- congenital infections, such as HIV and rubella
- central nervous system disorders, such as cerebral palsy and epilepsy
- hearing loss
- vision problems
- autism

To find and contact your *CDSA*, visit: <http://www.beeearly.nc.gov/index.php/contact/cdsa> and click on "Find Your CDSA."

EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN DEPARTMENTS IN SCHOOLS

The NC Department of Public Instruction's *Exceptional Children Program* promotes the development and successful participation of preschool-age and school-age children with special needs in a broad range of activities and contexts, including their homes, early learning programs, and communities. This program:

- serves children from three years old to 21 who have an identified need determined by the Individual Education Program (IEP) Team resulting from parental report, observation, and evaluation results conducted by qualified professionals in accordance with the North Carolina Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities. The delay or disability



must have an adverse effect on educational performance in the general curriculum and require specialized instruction so that the child may progress in the regular early childhood program;

- is based on parental consent; and
- provides services to all children regardless of income.

For more information, contact your local public school system. Visit: <https://nceln.fpg.unc.edu/leapreschoolcoordinators> for a list of *Exceptional Children* preschool program directors or <https://ec.ncpublicschools.gov/directory/lea-ec-program-directors> for school-age program directors by school district.

EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN'S ASSISTANCE CENTER (ECAC)

The *Exceptional Children's Assistance Center* (ECAC) is a training and information center that provides free information and assistance with educational issues to parents of children with disabilities. The ECAC offers a lending library, newsletter, and a Parent Info Line. For more information visit: <http://www.ecac-parentcenter.org/> or call 1-800.962.6817 or 704.892.1321.

Children's Social Emotional Development

Young children (infants to 5 years) are learning and growing at a rapid rate. One part of this growth is their social and emotional development - broadly defined as how well they manage their emotions and interact with others. Social and emotional development is important because it affects many parts of your child's life, including his or her behavior at home and with others, the ability to make friends, the willingness to try new things and handle frustrations, and future success in school.

Helping your child develop good social and emotional skills will make him/her more:

- happy and confident
- able to make and keep friends

- able to follow directions and learn new ideas
- ready to cope with stress
- willing to express his needs
- successful at school

If a behavior seems unusual, happens over and over, or goes on for a long time, this may mean your child needs extra help. Catching problems at an early age usually makes them a lot easier to solve. Help is available!

If you are concerned about your child's behavior(s):

- Contact your pediatrician and talk about your concerns.
- Contact your local CCR&R (see back pages) for a list of services available in your community that support children's social emotional development. Referral specialists will work with you to determine which resource(s) in your area may help you address your concerns. For additional social emotional resources from the NC CCR&R Council's Healthy Social Behaviors initiative, visit: http://childcarerrnc.org/s.php?s_ubpage=SocialEmotionalResources

Early Care and Education for Children and Families Experiencing Homelessness

Homelessness is a reality for many families with young children in our country. Children experiencing homelessness:

- are more likely to be born premature, at low birth weight, and/or require neonatal intensive care (NICU stay);
- are less likely to be breastfed and have well-baby visits;
- are more likely to have chronic health conditions, poor nutrition, and social-emotional delays; and
- are more likely to be exposed to violence.

In January of 2002, Congress authorized the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act to help people experiencing homelessness. The federal law includes the Education of Homeless Children and Youth Program that entitles children who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence to a free, appropriate education and requires schools to remove barriers to their enrollment, attendance, and success in school.

Example of living situations that may qualify under the McKinney-Vento Act include, but are not limited to:

- Living with a friend, relative, or other person/family because of a loss of housing
- Staying in a motel or hotel because of a loss of housing or fleeing domestic violence
- Living in an emergency shelter, transitional housing or domestic violence shelter
- Living in a car, park or public place, abandoned building, or bus station
- Living temporarily in substandard housing
- Living in a campground or an inadequate trailer home

The McKinney-Vento Act, requires every state to have *State Coordinators of Education for Homeless Children and Youth* (EHCY) and local liaisons designated by all public school systems in the state. Local liaisons identify homeless children and youth and connect them to other programs and resources (such as Head Start, Early Head Start, preschool, and health care, dental, mental health, and other appropriate services).

For younger children, the NC Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) has partnered with EHCY State Coordinators, local liaisons, and partner agencies to ensure that the information on the full range of child care services available for families experiencing homelessness is identified and made available. Contact your local CCR&R for more information about resources for families experiencing homelessness (see back pages)

For more information, contact your local CCR&R by finding your county in the list below.

Region 1 - Albemarle Alliance for Children and Families:
Counties served: Bertie, Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Gates, Hertford, Northampton, Pasquotank, Perquimans
1-800-262-8314 or <http://albemarleacf.org/what-we-do/for-families/>

- Children & Youth Partnership for Dare County
County served: Dare
252-441-4737 or <http://darekids.org/our-services>

Region 2 - Craven Smart Start, Inc. CCR&R
Counties served: Beaufort, Craven, Hyde, Pamlico, Tyrrell, Washington
Call: 866-262-5300 ext. 23 or <http://www.cravensmartstart.org/child-care/>

Region 3 – ChildLinks / Martin-Pitt Partnership for Children
Counties served: Carteret, Greene, Jones, Lenoir, Martin, Pitt
1-855-730-5798 or <http://www.mppfc.org/parents/child-care-referral/>

- Onslow County Partnership for Children
County served: Onslow
1-888-378-2470 or <http://www.onslowkids.org>

Region 4 - Puzzles / Southeastern CCR&R
Counties served: Bladen, Brunswick, Columbus, Duplin, New Hanover, Pender, Sampson
1-800-653-5212 or <https://www.puzzlesregion.com/parents.php>

Region 5 - Partnership for Children of Cumberland County
Counties served: Anson, Cumberland, Hoke, Montgomery, Moore, Richmond, Robeson, Scotland
1-877-230-3024 or <https://ccpfc.org/families/child-care-search-and-subsidy/>

Region 6 - Child Care Resources Inc.
Counties served: Cabarrus, Mecklenburg, Rowan, Stanly, Union
704-348-2181 or www.findchildcarenc.com

Region 7 - Child Care Connections of Cleveland County, Inc.
Counties served: Cleveland, Gaston, Lincoln
704-487-7778 or <http://www.cchildcareconnections.org>

- The Children's Resource Center of Catawba County
County served: Catawba
828-695-6565 or <https://childrensresourcecenter.org/>

Region 8 - Southwestern Child Development Commission
Counties served: Buncombe, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, Polk, Rutherford, Swain, Transylvania

1-877-752-5955 or <http://www.swcdcinc.org/family-services/finding-quality-child-care.php>

Region 9 - Child Care Solutions / Iredell County Partnership for Young Children

Counties served: Alexander, Avery, Burke, Caldwell, Iredell, McDowell, Mitchell, Watauga, Yancey

877-670-8735 or <http://region9ccrr.org/region9-resource-referral/>

Region 10 – Child Care Resource Center

Counties served: Alleghany, Ashe, Davidson, Davie, Forsyth, Stokes, Surry, Wilkes, Yadkin

336-245-4900 or <http://www.childcareresourcecenter.org>

Region 11 - Regional CCR&R of Guilford Child Development

Counties served: Guilford, Randolph, Rockingham

1-800-289-5098 or <http://guilfordchilddev.org/parents/care/>

Region 12 - Child Care Services Association

Counties served: Alamance, Caswell, Durham, Franklin, Granville, Orange, Person, Vance, Wake

1-855-327-5933 or <http://www.childcareservices.org/fs/finding/>

Region 13 – Chatham Co. Partnership for Children

Counties served: Chatham, Harnett, Johnston, Lee, Wayne

1-855-231-8717 or <http://chathamkids.org/families/findcare/>

Region 14 - Down East Partnership for Children

Counties served: Edgecombe, Halifax, Nash, Warren, Wilson

1-888-285-0849 or <http://depc.org/searching-for-child-care/>