

Mecklenburg County Early Childhood Education Public Opinion Poll

Result Summary

September 26, 2017

Main Findings

To gauge public interest and will to expand access to early care and education (ECE) for all children ages birth to five, a county-wide poll was commissioned and conducted between May 16, 2017 and June 13, 2017. Of 1,000 total respondents, support for expanding access to high-quality child care and public pre-k was strong across income, age, gender, race, ethnicity, level of education, and households with and those without young children.

Mecklenburg County Poll Strong Support for ECE Expansion

Nearly 90% of respondents expressed support for expanding access to high-quality early care and education programs.



Expanding Access to high-quality early learning programs

- 88% of respondents support increasing access to high-quality child care for children from birth to age 5 (with 69% expressing strong support).
- 89% of respondents support increasing access to high quality voluntary, public pre-k for 4-year-old children (with 76% expressing strong support).

Expand Access to High-Quality Child Care

Family Income	% Strong Support	% Total Support
Under \$40,000	79%	91%
\$40,000 - \$74,900	78%	92%
\$75,000+	66%	88%

Expand Access to Voluntary, Universal Public Pre-K

Family Income	% Strong Support	% Total Support
Under \$40,000	82%	91%
\$40,000 - \$74,900	86%	93%
\$75,000+	70%	87%

Child Brain Development

- 93% of respondents agree that between birth and age three, children's brains are developing the fastest, laying a foundation for future learning and growth (with 74% strongly agreeing).

School Readiness

- 93% of respondents agree that children do better in school if they start school ready to learn (with 83% strongly agreeing).
- 92% of respondents agree that children who enter school ready to learn are more likely to read at or above grade level by third grade (with 71% strongly agreeing).
- 91% of respondents agree that high-quality child care programs for children from birth to age five help ensure that children start school ready to learn (with 74% strongly agreeing).
- 88% of respondents agree that high-quality voluntary, public pre-k programs for 4-year-old children help ensure that children start school ready to learn (with 68% strongly agreeing).
- 92% of respondents agree that access to high-quality child care helps parents work and young children learn (with 71% strongly agreeing).

ECE Teacher Quality

- 93% of respondents agree that the key to providing high-quality public pre-k is a teaching workforce that has the necessary education and training (with 70% strongly agreeing).
- 91% of respondents agree that the key to providing high-quality child care is a teaching workforce that has the necessary education and training (with 71% strongly agreeing).

School Readiness Linked to High School Graduation

- 89% of respondents agree that children are more likely to graduate from high school if they start school ready to learn (with 75% strongly agreeing).

Broad Support for Paying for Early Learning Programs

The poll asked whether respondents would be willing to pay higher taxes to support ECE access. Half of respondents were asked if they would pay \$10 more a month in taxes to support ECE and the other half were asked whether they would be willing to pay \$20 more a month in taxes.

Willing to Pay \$10 More in Taxes Per Month

- 72% of respondents said they would be willing to pay \$10 more in taxes each month to increase access to high-quality child care for young children.
- 71% of respondents said they would be willing to pay \$10 more in taxes each month to support voluntary, universal public pre-k for 4-year-old children.

Willing to Pay \$20 More in Taxes Per Month

- 71% of respondents said they would be willing to pay \$20 more in taxes each month to increase access to high-quality child care for young children.
- 65% of respondents said they would be willing to pay \$20 more in taxes each month to support voluntary, universal public pre-k for 4-year-old children.

Overall, 4 out of 5 Mecklenburg County residents say that the County Commission should do more to make high quality early childhood education programs available in the county.

- 81% of residents say the County should do more to make high-quality early childhood education programs available in the county; 13% say the county is doing enough; and, 6% say the county should do less.

For more information, contact:

Mecklenburg County Manager's Office
Charlotte Mecklenburg Government Center
600 E. 4th Street, Charlotte, NC 28202

980.314.2900 MecklenburgCountyNC.gov

<https://www.mecknc.gov/CountyManagersOffice/Pages/Home.aspx>