



PROPOSED AGENDA

NCPK Committee



Date: August 18, 2021 **Time:** 11:00 pm
 Freedman Resource Center, 332 Greenhaven Drive NW (Zoom)

Meeting called by Dr. Don Phipps, Co-Chair

Committee Members

Caldwell County NCPK Committee: Co-Chair Kim Burns, Co-Chair Dr. Donald Phipps, Shari Brown, Candida Kiziah, Lacey Kincaid, Kristen Tufts, Stephanie Ashley, Shawn Corpening, Geri Ward, Paula Arrowood.

Vickie Sproul, NCPK Contract Administrator

Helena Vanhorn, NCPK Coordinator

	Topic	Presenter(s)	Exhibit(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	I. CALL TO ORDER 11:00 P.M.	Dr. Don Phipps, Committee Co-Chair	
<input type="checkbox"/>	II. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA*	Dr. Don Phipps, Committee Co-Chair	
<input type="checkbox"/>	III. APPROVAL OF NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS*	Dr. Don Phipps, Committee Co-Chair	
<input type="checkbox"/>	IV. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July 26, 2021 	Dr. Don Phipps, Committee Co-Chair	Exhibit 1
<input type="checkbox"/>	V. PUBLIC COMMENT (Comments must apply to an item on the agenda and requests for public comment must be received by 4:00 PM the day prior to the date of the meeting. Three minutes are allotted per person with a 20-minute maximum time allotment for public comment.)	Dr. Don Phipps, Committee Co-Chair	
<input type="checkbox"/>	VI. NEW BUSINESS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Committee Information <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Caldwell: Where We Are 2. NCPK Guidance 3. Funding for 21-22 4. Contract Overview 5. Additional Funds 6. Committee Assurances/Plan • For Committee Action <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NCPK Conflict of Interest* 2. Contract and Budget Allocations* 3. Site Reimbursement Rates* 4. Placement of Children* 5. Availability of Additional Funds* 6. NC Pre-K Plans* 7. Meeting Dates/Next Meeting* 	Helena Vanhorn, NCPK Coordinator Dr. Don Phipps, Committee Co-Chair	Exhibit 2 Exhibit 3
<input type="checkbox"/>	VII. ADJOURNMENT	Kim Burns, Committee Co-Chair	

*Requires Committee approval.

Exhibit 1

Minutes: July 26, 2021

Separate attachment to email

Exhibit 2

Conflict of Interest



**CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY
NC PRE-K PROGRAM COMMITTEE
2021-2022**

The standard of behavior of the NC Pre-K Committee is that all members scrupulously avoid conflicts of interest between the interests of the NC Pre-K Program and personal, professional, and business interests on the other. This includes avoiding potential and actual conflicts of interest, as well as perceptions of conflicts of interest.

The Committee understands that the purpose of this policy is to protect the integrity of the NC Pre-K Program's decision-making process, to enable our parents to have confidence in our integrity, and to protect the integrity and reputations of the Committee members. Upon or before appointment, Committee members will make a full, written disclosure of interests, relationships, and holdings that could potentially result in a conflict of interest. This written disclosure will be kept on file and will be updated as it is appropriate.

During meetings or activities, Committee members will disclose any interests in a transaction or decision where the Committee member, family and/or significant other, employer, or close associates will receive a benefit or gain. After disclosure, the Committee member will be allowed to participate in the discussion but will not be permitted to vote on the motion.

I understand that this policy is meant to supplement good judgment, and I will respect its spirit as well as its wording.

Sign: _____ Date: _____

Print Name: _____

Exhibit 3
NCPK County Plans

Caldwell County NC Pre-Kindergarten
Attendance Policy
2021-2022



10A NCAC 09 .3003 PROGRAM ATTENDANCE POLICY

When a child is absent for more than three consecutive days, the site-level administrator shall contact the child's parent to discuss the absences and determine whether the parent wishes the child to remain in the NC Pre-K Program. The site-level administrator shall document each attempt to contact the family and include decisions the child's parent makes regarding the child's continued participation in the program. The site-level administrator shall contact the local NC Pre-K contractor to share information related to the child's absence and to collaboratively determine what further actions may be necessary to maintain the child's attendance in the program. The site-level administrator shall not terminate a child's participation in the NC Pre-K program before determining if barriers to the child's attendance exist and can be remedied through assistance such as access to transportation or additional educational activities in the case of a child's illness or disability.

History Note: Authority G.S. 110-85; 110-88; S.L. 2011-145, s. 10.7(a);
Eff. November 1, 2012;
Readopted Eff. October 1, 2017.

It is very important that every child attends their NC Pre-Kindergarten classroom on a consistent basis. Classroom staff members are committed to working with the families to support attendance and participation in the NC Pre-K Program. It is the NC Pre-K Committee's goal that no student is pushed out of the program due to absenteeism. The Committee encourages each site to work with families proactively to encourage consistent, on-time attendance of each child.

Our Attendance Policy has been constructed to provide guidance to classroom staff in communicating with families about the importance of regular attendance during the preschool year. Research shows that chronic absence in preschool and kindergarten can predict who will miss too much school later. In Chicago, children chronically absent in preschool were five times more likely to miss too much kindergarten.¹ Since NC Pre-Kindergarten targets at-risk children with the primary qualifying factor being low income, it is important to know that children from low-income families are more likely to be chronically absent and more likely to be adversely affected by the lost instructional time. In fact, low-income children are four times more likely to be chronically absent.²

On the positive side of regular attendance in preschool, studies have shown that children show more growth in literacy skills than those who were frequently absent³ and that students who arrive in pre-K with the weakest reading skills and attendance regularly saw the biggest gains.⁴

¹ Ehrlich Stacy B. et al. Preschool Attendance in Chicago Public Schools: Relationships with Learning Outcomes and Reasons for Absences, University of Chicago, Consortium on Chicago School Research, May 2014.

² Chang, Hedy; & Romero, Mariajose, Present, Engaged and Accounted For: The Critical Importance of Addressing Chronic Absence in the Early Grades, National Center for Children in Poverty; NY: NY, September 2008.

³ Community Action Project Tulsa County. Attendance Works Peer Learning Network Webinar. February 27, 2012.

⁴ Ehrlich

The NC Pre-K Program Attendance Policy

General Absences

When a child has been absent for 3 consecutive days, the NC Pre-K site administrator or the classroom teacher should contact the family to determine the child's participation status. All attempts at communicating with families should be documented on the monthly attendance form and in the communication log. If the parent makes contact with the NCPK site first regarding absence, this communication should also be documented. The teacher and/or site administrator should document any decisions made regarding the child's continued participation in the program. Every effort will be made to maintain the child's placement and participation in the NC Pre-K program. If a child misses a certain number of days, according to state policy, the monthly payment may not be made to the classroom for that slot or may be reduced.

If a child is absent from the classroom for 5 consecutive days, with no communication from the parent, and the classroom staff is unable to contact the family to determine the status of the child's placement, the classroom teacher will send a note in the mail to give a deadline for when the child must return or the parent must communicate to the teacher about their intentions. A copy of any written communication regarding attendance should be maintained in the child's file. If the parent does not communicate with the teacher by the end of the following week, the teacher/site director should send a termination letter to the family and contact Caldwell County Schools Preschool Readiness Center to pursue a replacement for that slot. The child will be placed at the top of the waiting list if communication is re-established with the family and there is interest.

Extended Absences

When a parent communicates with the classroom staff or site about an anticipated absence from the NC Pre-K Program for a period of 3 weeks or more, the classroom teacher should inform the parent that the slot may not be held open until that child returns. The teacher/site administrator should inform Caldwell County Schools Preschool Readiness Center that a new placement is needed and the absent child will be placed at the top of the waiting list if that classroom should have openings when he or she returns. All special circumstances should be discussed with the Preschool Readiness Center office before final decisions are made or if there are questionable circumstances for a child/family. Each NC Pre-K site should inform families of this policy at the beginning of the school year.

Partnering with Families

The NC-PreK Committee encourages each site to be proactive in helping to encourage high rates of attendance by making consistent, on-time attendance a highly visible part of the preschool environment. Posters, jingles, contests and recognition make on-time attendance something children and parents strive for. NC Pre-K classroom staff can:

- Pay attention to attendance to look for trends in absence. Trends may be higher rates of absence at a specific time of year or day or with families who have transportation challenges. Problem-solve with families by reaching out to them.
- Notify the NC Pre-K office regarding concerns for immediate assistance in contacting families or for ideas to assist.
- Notify the school social worker, principal, or site director for assistance. These individuals may have information about particular families or have support that the classroom staff are unaware of.

- Educate parents about what children learn in the early years and why attendance matters.
- Make children a part of the solution. Use games, songs, and charts to begin teaching children about attendance and being at school.

Caldwell County NC Pre-Kindergarten
Challenging Behavior Plan
2021-2022



The Caldwell County NC Pre-Kindergarten Committee recognizes that challenging behaviors can be a significant factor resulting in suspension and expulsion of preschool children. It is the goal of our Committee to provide a plan which guides Local Education Agency (LEA) and community NC Pre-Kindergarten sites when experiencing such behaviors to prevent these outcomes. A high quality early school experience lays the foundation for developing life-long skills for positive, stable personal and work relationships later in life. Approved sites will provide supportive classrooms where the social-emotional and behavioral health of all children are fostered.

The 2014 Joint Policy Statement developed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Education and the Foundation for Child Development 2008 Policy Brief No. 7 are the primary guiding documents for the creation of this plan. The philosophies, guidance, recommendations, research, and data from these documents, as well as other relevant resources, all contributed to establishing the Caldwell County NC Pre-Kindergarten Challenging Behavior Plan.

This plan addresses the philosophy and guiding practices endorsed by the Caldwell County NC Pre-Kindergarten Committee. These recommendations are being provided for both LEA and community sites to help NC Pre-Kindergarten staff and administrators positively support children with challenging behaviors.

Focus on preventing suspension and expulsion.

Preventive and discipline practices should be used as learning opportunities to guide children's appropriate behavioral and social-emotional development. This is best developed by creating positive climates that support each child's ability to successfully participate in the classroom.

1. Develop and Clearly Communicate Preventive Guidance and Discipline Practices

Each NC Pre-Kindergarten site should establish developmentally appropriate classroom behavior expectations as well as discipline and intervention practices. These should all be clearly communicated with all staff, parents, and children.

2. Develop and Clearly Communicate Expulsion, and Suspension Policies

Each site shall develop an expulsion and suspension policy which is clearly communicated with staff and parents.

3. Access Technical Assistance in Workforce Development to Prevent Expulsion and Suspension

Locally, all sites can access Technical Assistance in at least two direct ways.

- 1) Caldwell County Smart Start provides a ~~part-time~~ **full-time** Behavior Support Specialist to any site/classroom experiencing challenging behaviors. The specialist does not work with children, but observes, collects data, and makes recommendations for classroom adjustments and interventions to address an individual child's need for support.

- 2) Caldwell County Schools provides behavior and social-emotional support to children with special needs in community sites. Requests for support may be made through the Preschool Readiness Center during the school year.

Develop clear, appropriate, and consistent expectations and consequences to address disruptive student behaviors.

When challenging behaviors occur, staff should review the written practices and policies at their site to determine if they are appropriate, clear and consistent. Staff should consider whether written practices and policies have expectations and consequences which are also appropriate, clear and consistent. These should be continuously reviewed and improved to include all children to ensure equity and fairness. These then are usable as the foundation for developing an individual plan for addressing specific challenging behaviors.

1. Set Goals and Analyze Data to Assess Progress

Technical Assistance/Guidance is provided by the Caldwell County Schools Preschool Readiness Center directly to sites and includes steps for research-based practices. The Committee recommends that parents be included in all stages of the development and implementation of any individualized plan implemented in the classroom. Families have valuable knowledge of their child and are a resource that should be accessed for addressing challenging behaviors.

The Committee has reviewed Guidance from the NC Pre-Kindergarten Program Requirements and Guidance and recommends that this guidance be clearly communicated to all site administrators and NC Pre-Kindergarten staff by the NCPK Contractor.

2. Make Use of Free Resources to Enhance Staff Training and Strengthen Family Partnerships

A plethora of free information and resources are available online and in the community to support preschool classrooms experiencing challenging behaviors.

The Committee acknowledges that the best “free” resource available to staff and administrators are parents. All staff should seek out resources to develop skills/strategies for conducting successful, positive meetings and conversations with parents to prevent approaching parents with accusatory or confrontational words or body language due to stress. Parents will always be the best resource for supporting a child’s success.

The Committee has reviewed the brief list of resources included in the NC Pre-Kindergarten Program Requirements and Guidance and recommends this list, at a minimum, be provided to all NCPK staff and administrators. When developing practices and policies, developing individual plans, and implementing plans, staff and administrators should access and utilize these resources to improve outcomes for staff and children.

The Committee recommends that all sites utilize the free services provided through the Caldwell County Smart Start Behavior Support Specialist and the LEA (for children with special needs).

The Committee recommends that site administrators access the Regional Behavior Consultant through the Iredell Partnership for Children to provide free training to all staff at no charge. Limited classroom support is also available.

The Committee recommends that all NC Pre-Kindergarten staff participate in the training offered through the LEA for the NC Social-Emotional Foundations of Early Learning (SEFEL). The Committee acknowledges that staff, both teachers and assistants, must have a consistent understanding of foundational practices in order for them to be effectively implemented.

The Committee recommends that, when available, NCPK classrooms participate in formal coaching for fidelity in implementing SEFEL practices.

References

Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), Social-Emotional and Behavioral Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (September 2015).

Gilliam, Walter S. (2008). Implementing policies to reduce the likelihood of preschool expulsion (FCD Policy Brief Advancing PK-3 No. 7). New York: Foundation for Child Development.

Growing Up Well: Supporting Young Children's Social-Emotional Development and Mental Health in North Carolina (July 2012).

Policy Statement on Expulsion and Suspension Policies in Early Childhood Setting, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S Department of Education (2014).

Caldwell County NC Pre-Kindergarten
Family Engagement Plan
2021-2022



10A NCAC 09 .3010 FAMILY ENGAGEMENT NC Pre-K programs shall develop a plan for family engagement consisting of strategies designed to develop partnerships with families that promote shared decision-making opportunities. These opportunities include: (1) Allowing Pre-K program teachers the opportunity for home visits; (2) Formal and informal parent/teacher conferences; (3) Classroom visits and options for parents and families to participate in classroom activities; (4) Parent education; (5) Allowing family members the opportunity for involvement in decision making about their own child and about their child's early childhood program; and (6) Opportunities to engage families outside of the regular school day. History Note: Authority G.S. 110-85; 110-88; S.L. 2011-145, s. 10.7(a); Eff. November 1, 2012; Readopted Eff. October 1, 2017.

Family involvement is essential for every child's success in preschool and beyond. Likewise, it is important that each NC Pre-K family be offered a full range of support services that will foster self-sufficiency and enhance parenting skills. A collaborative partnership between school and family will optimize chances for every child's school success; therefore, it is essential that NC Pre-K parents participate in classes and services offered. In order to both involve parents in the preschool program and address parenting needs, we will offer information and assist families in connecting support and services with other community resources.

- 1. Caldwell County DSS .** CCDSS offers parenting classes, including an 8-week intensive plan for parents. Some classes are offered in English and in Spanish. CCDSS classes are free to participants.
- 2. Caldwell County Schools Preschool Readiness Support.** Support is provided to site administrators, classroom staff, and parents regarding NC Pre-K guidelines and policies, site information, problem resolution, and to address parent concerns.
- 3. Smart Start Behavior Support.** A behavior specialist is available to all NC Pre-K classrooms and parents needing support with child specific social/emotional and behavior-related issues. The specialist provides consultation and/or direct intervention with children and families and also helps link parents to other community resources for support.
- 4. Non-English Speaking support.** Caldwell County Schools, Head Start, and Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute's Family Literacy Program provide community support for non-English speaking parents. Parents may utilize translation and interpretation services for established needs through each of these organizations by contacting them directly. CCC&TI has applications for gas vouchers for NC Pre-K parents who are also English Language Learners and enrolled at CCC&TI.
- 5. Other family involvement strategies.** Our NC Pre-K classroom teacher and site administrators welcome family participation. Families are invited and encouraged to participate in their child's

classroom through a variety of opportunities at each site. Some strategies used to increase family involvement include:

- parent volunteers
- Parent Show and Tell
- family culture sharing
- parent opportunities to assist with classroom or site events
- parent/family committee opportunities
- site Parent Handbook, which includes information about the individual site as well as specific information about family activities
- daily conversations with each family during arrival and departure times
- regular progress reports sent home
- classroom and site newsletters
- posted information about center events, community programs, and community resources
- parent-teacher conferences throughout the school year
- take-home kits for extending learning into the home

Caldwell County NC Pre-Kindergarten
Serving Families with Limited English Proficiency Plan
2021-2022



Caldwell County NC Pre-Kindergarten Committee recognizes that our community has an increasing number of children and families for whom English is not their first language. Ensuring that this at-risk population is included in NC Pre-Kindergarten is of utmost importance in facilitating entry into schooling. The Committee encourages NC Pre-Kindergarten sites to assist families in accessing information about the site, opportunities in the community, and other services that may benefit the child and family.

- The Committee encourages NC Pre-Kindergarten sites to provide families with information in their native language to support inclusion of all children.
- The Committee also encourages teachers to use free communication apps that support translation of information and messages to and from families.

There are a variety of resources available to serve families who do not speak English. These include:

- Caldwell County NC Pre-Kindergarten application is available to families in both English and Spanish, the two most common languages used in the county.
- Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute maintains community resource information on their website. These resources have been saved in a Google Drive document and made available to all NC Pre-Kindergarten sites as a resource for accessing and referring families to applicable agencies to meet their needs.
- Within the sites providing NC Pre-Kindergarten, Head Start and Caldwell County Schools provide translators for meetings when requested by families. Staff serving those sites are able to seek assistance in communicating with those families as well.
- Caldwell County is a small community with many individuals willing to offer support when they have the ability. Oftentimes, community NC Pre-Kindergarten sites are able to get assistance from other families or their staff to assist with translation when needed.
- Family backpacks are available to NC Pre-Kindergarten teachers for check-out. These backpacks contain books in the five most commonly identified foreign languages used by families in the county.

Additional support may also include:

- Professional development to NC Pre-Kindergarten staff on research-based strategies for interacting with and teaching ELLs.
- Classroom educational materials and labels in native languages when possible.
- Collaboration between community NC Pre-Kindergarten sites and the school system when there are concerns regarding development.
- Involving families in their child's early school experience by providing opportunities for them to share their skills with staff, children in the program, and other families.
- Providing options for home-based activities that can support what children are learning at school as much as possible.

Caldwell County NC Pre-Kindergarten
Transition Plan
2021-2022



Smooth transitions in all phases of early childhood are crucial to children's mental health and school success. Because the NC Pre-Kindergarten program focuses on children who may be at risk for school failure, the NC Pre-K Committee is committed to maximizing community resources to ensure that our students experience smooth transitions both into the NC Pre-Kindergarten classroom and, later, into kindergarten.

Individual NC Pre-Kindergarten staff and site administrators have access to a wide variety of resources, which may include school counselors and social workers, Early Childhood Program Support Specialists, Caldwell Smart Start, Caldwell County Special Families, Caldwell County Department of Social Services, Mental Health, and Public Health programs, Children's Developmental Services Agency evaluation and coordination (where appropriate), and others.

Transitions into NC Pre-Kindergarten

Recognizing that many children entering the NC Pre-Kindergarten program have never attended group childcare, individual sites know that the families they will serve will often reflect the anxiety their child feels upon beginning this next step in life. Individual sites have developed a variety of methods to welcome these families. Different programs and sites have elected to address the need to welcome families and learn about individual child needs in their own way. Some of these ways may include:

- make home visits with each family early in the school year, so they may become acquainted with the family's culture and address individual child and family concerns.
- invite families to visit their site and classroom prior to the school year beginning.
- schedule individual parent meetings prior to the school year to assist families in completing paperwork, answering questions, and learning what to expect.

All sites provide regular information to families about what their child is doing.

- Teachers will provide regular communication (newsletters, etc.).
- Parent-teacher conferences will be held periodically during the year, so that parents can keep abreast of their child's progress.
- Families are invited to participate in classroom and site events when appropriate.

Family resource information may be provided by NC Pre-Kindergarten staff including:

- Caldwell County Department of Social Services resources including parenting classes (focusing on information about child development and positive discipline) throughout the year.
- Local agency and program information such as Caldwell Family Literacy, homelessness resources, and food insecurity information.

Individual child support is provided to help each child be successful in transitioning into preschool.

- NC Pre-Kindergarten staff will use classroom strategies to help all children transition successfully including identifying any specific needs and resources for success.

- School personnel will facilitate Individual Education Plans and transition plans for children with identified disabilities, with information available about family supports available from other local programs and agencies.

Transitions into Kindergarten

While NC Pre-Kindergarten families will have completed what will be, for many, their first schooling experience, they may continue to be anxious about their child's next steps toward kindergarten. To make that transition less stressful and to help families understand differences between preschool and school-age expectations and goals, a series of steps have been developed to support that progression.

In the preschool classroom:

- NC Pre-kindergarten teachers will introduce concepts related to kindergarten to help children anticipate and prepare.
- Teachers will also complete end of year screenings that will be sent to the child's school thereby eliminating the need for families to attend the regular screenings. Screenings conducted in the child's preschool classroom keep them in their natural environment which research shows results in a more complete record of their abilities; it also allows parents to remain at work. Families will still participate in kindergarten enrollment and orientation in order to meet and greet kindergarten staff.
- In addition to schools receiving the screening protocols, kindergarten will also receive a Child Development Information form. As a participant in the NC Transition to Kindergarten Pilot, each NC Pre-Kindergarten child will have a completed state form sent to the kindergarten school prior to Fall. This summary form provides a quick overview of each child's skills. This overview allows kindergarten staff to have conversations with the preschool teacher and parent so they can begin planning for individual children well before Fall.
- For children with an Individual Education Plan, teachers arrange special meetings to be held at the child's school in order to introduce families to the receiving special education team and so families can share about their child as well as ask questions.

At the kindergarten school:

- In the Spring, elementary schools schedule Kindergarten Orientation for rising kindergarteners which can include sharing of information about Caldwell County Schools, presenting specific school information and expectations, and addressing questions from families.
- For non NC Pre-kindergarten as well as NC Pre-kindergarten children who score low on the screening tool, have identified concerns for making the kindergarten transition, or who have never attended a preschool program, families may apply for a summer Rising Stars placement. This program operates in the last few weeks before school starts for half-days to help children ease into kindergarten. While slots are limited, this opportunity is unique to Caldwell County Schools and data shows that children consistently make significant gains.



2021-2022

While all county public school systems and private site administrators agree that providing transportation for all students would best meet the needs of families, the local NC Pre-K Committee concedes that our local program is unable to meet this objective at present. Site administrators make every effort to assist families in making reliable transportation plans, maximizing available community and family resources, and recognizing safety as the most important attribute of the plan for each child.

At present, no funding is available to provide transportation to our NC Pre-K families. Site administrators may consult with parents, grandparents, other relatives, family friends, or neighbors to assist in providing safe, reliable transportation to and from school each day. It is the policy of our local NC Pre-K program to accept students across school district lines to facilitate easier transportation of children for parents who are working or enrolled in school. Caldwell County Schools is also committed to working with parents to identify other before and after school options to help with transportation to and from the NC Pre-K classroom each day.

As a part of the local Transition policy, safe arrival and departure on site is as important as the transportation to get there. NC Pre-K classroom staff will assist parents each day by greeting and receiving children into their classrooms in the morning, and following school policies for pick-up at the end of the school day. Classroom staff will maintain appropriate child/staff ratios at all times during morning and afternoon transition times.

If NC Pre-K classes leave school grounds for field trips, site staff will follow all relevant regulations of the public schools, as well as NC Division of Child Development and Early Education child care regulations, regarding child/staff ratios, mode of transportation, parent permission, staff training, etc. Parents will be encouraged to accompany their children on field trips whenever possible.