

THE KEY TO COMMUNITY-WIDE SUCCESS:

EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING PROGRAMS

Have you seen a child's eyes light up as they experience something new? It's a magical moment, and life's first four years are full of them.

These learning moments are about more than the joy—they can also ensure children start kindergarten on track, setting them up for a lifetime of success. That's why early childhood learning programs are critical not just for our littlest learners, but for our entire community.



The Data Tells a Powerful Story

When kids have access to early learning activities, they build important literacy and social emotional skills that help them thrive. Children of all races and income levels who participate in early learning activities are more likely to:



GRADUATE HIGH SCHOOL



ATTEND COLLEGE



BECOME HIGH EARNERS



LAUNCHING AN INNOVATIVE EARLY LEARNING PROGRAM

In the 2019-20 school year, only half of early learners met North Carolina's kindergarten readiness goals. This statistic is one of the many reasons the Edgecombe County Public Schools (ECPS) team asked *an important question*, launching an exciting journey.

▶ How can educators ensure that every child is ready to succeed when they start kindergarten?

01 INPUT + RESEARCH

The ECPS team started with community feedback, interviewing students, parents and early childhood educators. They also looked at trusted research and data about successful early learning programs.

02 PROGRAM LAUNCH

These insights helped the team reimagine what early learning could look like in the district—and what it could look like in other districts across the country. They created a three-part program, which they launched in 2021.

03 FEEDBACK + IMPROVE

The team is seeking continual feedback from families, students, community members and educators as the district pilots these critical programs. They are updating the program based on the data—ensuring they best serve children and families.

THREE STRATEGIES TO HELP STUDENTS SUCCEED

1 Early Learning Academies

ECPS launched Early Learning Academies (pods) as its first early learning initiative. Community parents are invited to bring their 3- and 4-year-old children to free pod meetings. These pods spark student curiosity through activities designed to teach kids important skills, from how to hold a pencil to making friends. Students have fun and learn through themed lessons, preparing them to start kindergarten on track.

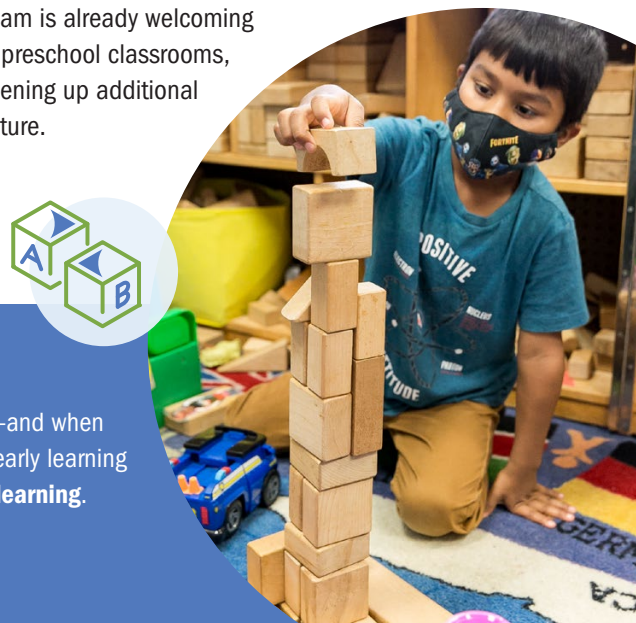
Parents are welcome to join their children during the weekly pods—helping them support children in learning, and building strong parent communities as well. ECPS is also launching a Parent Community Educator Academy, offering in-home and in-community literacy and social-emotional development support to families with young children.

2 Early Learning Collaborative

As its next step, ECPS is creating an Early Learning Collaborative. This collaborative regularly brings Edgecombe organizations and individuals that serve preschool children together—ensuring these leaders can learn from and support one another.

3 Expanded Pre-K

Finally, the ECPS team is already welcoming 3 year olds to their preschool classrooms, with the hope of opening up additional spots in the near future.



Learn More and Start Your Early Learning Plan

When kids are ready for kindergarten, they are more likely to thrive for a lifetime—and when children succeed, the entire community wins. You can learn more about ECPS's early learning work, and how you can begin or partner in this work, by visiting tipnc.org/early-learning.