



Cherokee County Smart Start / Local Interagency Coordinating Council Team Meeting Minutes  
 Date: 2/5/25  
 Minutes completed by Jody Miller

**Welcome and Introductions**

Monica Matthews (PAT); Lorrie Ross (Mountain Projects); Cecilia Estremera (Vaya); Chrystal Mimbs (Catholic Charities); Barbara Jefferys (NC PreK); Syvella Symonds (Maximus); Sarah Clark (Mtn Projects); Desiree Durning (AmeriHealth); Deanna Lyles (RAPC); Toineeta Saunooke-Leonard (BCBS); Charlotte Destino (Hearing Detection); Tiffany Martinez (CDSA); Lori Baker (LANC); Francisco Guzman (DHHS); Randi Braun (RAPC); and Jody Miller (RAPC)

**Presentations**

Barbara provided the group with information on NC PreK. The application is in the process of being translated to Spanish as soon as it is ready will be up on the website. Free program to qualified children in all counties. It is a 6.5 or more hour per day program, 5 days a week through 10 months. Gets the children ready for kindergarten. A family needs to go to the provider where they would like to enroll the child and complete the NC PreK application and enrollment paperwork. Need a birth certificate and a way to verify income such as a W2, tax return, or pay stubs. If receiving any type of public assistance, complete page 5 and no other income verification is needed. There are other ways to qualify if over income such as the child having an IEP, homeless, medical condition, or military family. Besides being income eligible, the child needs to be 4 by 8/31 of the year. Sites have their own requirements in which the lead teacher needs to have a bachelors degree in Birth through K, be a 4 or 5 star site, a 5.0 or higher on the ECERS, and use an approved curriculum. Any questions please reach out to Barbara, NC Pre-K Coordinator, 828-226-6445, bjefferys@rapc.org. [www.rapc.org/ncprek](http://www.rapc.org/ncprek).

**Upcoming Presentations**

- March—Parents as Teachers
- April— FNS Benefits-qualifying and applying for
- May—open
- June—Planning for next fiscal year

**Smart Start Strategic Plan**

The team is focusing on Children in households that are food insecure: 16.1% in 2021. A decrease from 22.1% in 2019. The team feels that there was a lot of food available during COVID and this still may not be a true number.

The second data point the team wants to impact on is Children without health insurance: 8.3% in 2021. A slight increase from 8.2% in 2020.

**Vision:** Efficient collaboration of all community groups impacting children and families.  
**Mission:** Collaborating to extend awareness and access of services impacting children and families and to address needs identified for children and families in Cherokee County.

<b>LICC Strategic Plan</b>	Promote child find through events.
<b>Activities to Achieve Strategies</b>	Collaborate with Legal Aid and the 3rd Annual Resource Fair—Promote Medicaid, healthcare marketplace, food resource list, early intervention and preschool services.  Plan a drive through food distribution/resource fair in collaboration with Catholic Charities in the spring of 2025.
<b>General Team Goals</b>	Desired outputs for 2023 - 2024: Number of meetings/times review goals: 8 (6); Number of events: 2 (2); Number of team member / community presentations: 7 (6)
<b>Old / New Business</b>	Cherokee/Clay Roll and Read—more details to follow as the team develops the plan for the event. • Theme is Brush Book Bed. Book is Pete the Cat and the New Guy. Working on location—TCCC and date—first choice is 5/17 and second choice is 5/3.
<b>Planned Community Events</b>	N/A
<b>What worked, what should we do differently, and when do we meet again</b>	<b>Our next meeting is scheduled for March 5, 2025</b>

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