

**INITIAL ANALYSIS OF SURVEY  
ON PUBLIC AGENCIES SERVING  
CHILDREN UNDER AGE SIX  
*BUNCOMBE COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA***

**Prepared for**

**CHILDREN FIRST  
UNITED WAY OF ASHEVILLE AND BUNCOMBE COUNTY  
Asheville, North Carolina**

**By**

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**BACKGROUND**

In September 1995, Children First of the United Way of Asheville and Buncombe County contracted with the Southern Institute on Children and Families to provide technical assistance in the collection and analysis of data on services for children under age six.<sup>1</sup> Public and private agencies in Buncombe County have demonstrated a commitment to work together on behalf of children and families. In order to work more effectively across agency lines to plan and deliver services for young children and their families, it was decided that an organizational assessment was needed.

The purpose of the organizational assessment is to better understand how much and where local, state and federal funding is being used to serve young children. The organizational assessment will help to identify areas where collaboration could reduce costs and/or enhance service delivery and to identify unmet needs. Specifically, the organizational assessment will further the work of planning for Smart Start in Buncombe County.<sup>2</sup>

This report presents a preliminary analysis of organizational data provided by participating public agencies. It also sets forth recommendations for "next steps" as the Buncombe County community strives to make services more effective and responsive for children under age six.

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<sup>1</sup>The Southern Institute on Children and Families is a nonprofit organization based in Columbia, South Carolina. The Southern Institute conducts public policy research on issues of significance to the southern states and provides technical assistance to states and communities working to improve services for children and families.

<sup>2</sup>Smart Start is an early childhood initiative that seeks to bring high quality early childhood and family support services to children and families who need and want those services. The goal of Smart Start is for all of North Carolina's children to begin kindergarten healthy and ready to succeed in school. The initiative provides state funding for local partnerships to plan and implement creative, collaborative strategies to meet the needs of children and families.

## SURVEY PROCESS

To assess the programs and services offered to children under age six in Buncombe County an organizational survey was developed by the ARC Work Group with the assistance of the Southern Institute on Children and Families. The ARC Work Group was composed of the following members:

Elaine Barnes, Buncombe County Health Department  
Sam Dempsey, Asheville City Schools  
Joyce Greene, Developmental Evaluation Center  
Camille Hawks, Buncombe County Child Development Center  
Jerrie Honeycutt, Opportunity Corporation of Madison-Buncombe Counties  
Alecia Ralston, Blue Ridge Center  
Tim Rhodes, Buncombe County Department of Social Services  
Jane Stephens, Buncombe County Schools  
Vicki Grant, Southern Institute on Children and Families

Prior to development of the survey, the Southern Institute on Children and Families contacted regional and national experts on collaboratives to obtain information and copies of survey instruments used for organizational assessments. Very little information was found that was helpful in designing an organizational survey.<sup>3</sup> The ARC Work Group met five times over a four month period (November 1995 through February 1996). The first three meetings were devoted to survey construction. The two meetings in February were for the purpose of reviewing the initial data output and making necessary adjustments to assure accuracy.

The organizational survey of children under age six in Buncombe County was completed by the following agencies:

- Asheville City Schools
- Bethany Christian Services
- Blue Ridge Center for Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services
- Buncombe County Child Development
- Buncombe County Department of Social Services
- Buncombe County Health Department
- Buncombe County Schools
- Developmental Evaluation Center
- Opportunity Corporation of Madison-Buncombe Counties
- Professional Parenting

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<sup>3</sup>Southern Institute on Children and Families, Briefing Report on Similar Projects, prepared for Children First, Asheville, North Carolina (November 1995).

In order to focus on the eight public agencies responding to the survey, this preliminary analysis excludes Bethany Christian Services and Professional Parenting.

The survey was constructed to obtain information at three levels of each organization: (1) agency level; (2) program level; and (3) service level. Most of the information is at the service level to allow for aggregation at the program and agency levels. In developing the survey instrument, the ARC Work Group identified and categorized 83 services for children under age six. The identification of services gave the participating agencies a common language to use in completing the survey and, more importantly, to use in working together in the future. The seven service categories are as follows:

- Screening (for eligibility or need) - 17 services
- Diagnostic/Evaluative Services - 14 services
- Treatment/Therapy - 14 services
- Educational Development Services - 7 services
- Support Services - 13 services
- Economic Assistance Services - 12 services
- Other Specialized Care - 6 services

The list of services and the organizational survey instrument are provided in Appendix A.

This report presents a preliminary analysis of survey information on children under age six in Buncombe County, as follows:

- Number of children under six served during FY 1995
- Estimated expenditures during FY 1995 by each agency
- Source and type of funds expended
- Program governance
- Specific services provided by each program and agency
- Estimated FTEs assigned to specific services by program and agency
- Specific services currently provided where expansions are needed
- Services not available or accessible
- Case management
- Participation on interagency groups

The survey produced a great deal of detailed organizational information comparable across agencies. The agencies participating in the survey worked diligently to provide accurate responses to the survey. Some questions required agencies to provide their best estimates, particularly on questions related to expenditures and FTEs. Estimates were necessary for agency programs which

serve a broader population than children under age six, serve residents of a broader geographic area than only Buncombe County or provide services to specific children who receive services across agencies. Since time was limited, it is important to note that the findings below represent a first cut on the analysis. Additional analyses will yield more indepth information for decision making.

## **FINDINGS**

### **Children Served**

In Buncombe County, there are 12,908 children ages 0 through five years, of whom 2,303 (17.8%) live in families with incomes below the poverty level. The eight public programs responding to the survey provided organizational information related to this population only.

- The eight public agencies operate 51 programs which serve children under age six in Buncombe County.
- Of the 51 programs, only 15 are exclusively for children under age six.
- Almost half of the programs are mandated.
- During FY 1995, the agencies screened 38,215 children under age six (duplicated count) to determine eligibility or need for services prior to providing services.
- Services were provided to 59,065 children under age six (duplicated count).
- Only Asheville City Schools and Buncombe County Schools actually provide more children with screening services than direct services.

Table B-1 in the appendix displays the numbers of children under age six served and screened for each program.

### **Estimated Expenditures**

During FY 1995, the agencies expended an estimated \$33,781,771 on children under age six, ranging from a low of \$435,096 by the Developmental Evaluation Center to a high of \$21,714,575 by the Buncombe County Department of Social Services. The table below provides expenditures by agency.

Table 1  
 Ranking of Agency Estimated Expenditures on Children Under Age Six  
 in Buncombe County, FY 1995

Agency	Estimated Expenditures on Children Under Age Six
Buncombe County Department of Social Services	\$21,714,575
Buncombe County Child Development	\$3,746,784
Buncombe County Health Department	\$2,325,000
Opportunity Corporation of Madison-Buncombe Counties	\$1,879,769
Buncombe County Schools	\$1,689,130
Asheville City Schools	\$1,323,987
Blue Ridge Center for Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services	\$667,430
Developmental Evaluation Center	\$435,096

Table B-2 in the appendix provides estimated expenditures by program for each agency. An average of \$572 was expended per child. The averages ranged from a low of \$74 by the Health Department to a high of \$1,531 by the Blue Ridge Center.

The North Carolina Department of Human Resources directly provides over \$22 million in federal and state funds. Buncombe County directly provides almost \$3.5 million in county funds, followed by the State Department of Public Instruction at \$2.5 million in federal and state funds. For all services, federal funds account for 58%, state funds for 21%, and county funds for 10%. The remaining 11% is composed of small amounts from other sources, plus funds which were not separately identified by type. Of all funds expended, approximately 11% are local sources. (Some duplication in expenditures may exist as agencies contract with each other and each reports the expenditure.)

### **Program Governance**

Only five of the 51 programs are governed solely by local board or agency policy. This is largely a result of the source of funding. The programs under local discretion are as follows:

- Asheville City Schools Preschool Local Program
- Buncombe County Child Development Resource and Referral Service
- Health Department Dental Clinic
- Health Department School Health Program
- Health Department Day Care Service Program

In contrast, federal law governs 18 programs and state laws and/or regulations govern 26 programs. Table B-3 displays the type of funds by the amount each agency expended during FY 1995 for children under age six.

## **Services**

The information on services is presented by service category.

### Screening Services

All agencies perform two or more screening services. Buncombe County Child Development provides the fewest screening services (2) and the Health Department provides all 17 screening services. Financial Eligibility Determination is performed by all agencies in 18 of the 51 programs. Nonfinancial Eligibility Determination is performed by seven agencies across 14 programs. Asheville City Schools and Buncombe County Schools provide the same screening services, except that Asheville City Schools also screen for Self-Help skills. The table below shows the number of agencies providing screening services. Table B-4 in the appendix identifies the specific agencies.

Table 2  
 Screening Services Provided by Agencies and Programs  
 Ranked by Number of Agencies

Screening Services	Number of Agencies	Number of Programs
Financial Eligibility Determination	8	18
Nonfinancial Eligibility Determination	7	14
Social/Emotional	6	15
Educational/Developmental	6	13
Hearing	6	12
Speech/Language	6	12
Motor	6	11
Cognitive	6	10
Sensory Motor	6	10
Nutrition	6	9
Vision	5	10
Health Screening	5	9
Self-Help	5	9
Abuse and Neglect Intake	4	5
Dental	4	5
Mental Health Intake	3	5
In-Home Maternal and Newborn Assessments	2	2

### Diagnostic/Evaluation Services

Diagnostic/evaluative services are offered by each of the agencies. The table below displays the services by the number of agencies and programs offering the service. Table B-5 in the appendix identifies the specific agencies.

Table 3 Diagnostic/Evaluative Services Provided by Agencies and Programs Ranked by Number of Agencies		
Diagnostic/Evaluative Services	Number of Agencies	Number of Programs
Social/Emotional	5	13
Educational (Readiness Skills, "Ages & Stages")	5	10
Motor	5	8
Sensory Motor	5	7
Speech/Language	4	8
Hearing	4	7
Psychological Testing	4	5
Nutrition	3	5
Vision	3	5
Medical	3	4
Health Screening	3	4
Self-Help	3	4
Abuse and Neglect Investigation	3	3
Dental	1	2

### Treatment/Therapy Services

Treatment/therapy services are offered by each of the agencies as displayed in the table below. Table B-6 in the appendix identifies the specific agencies.

Table 4 Treatment/Therapy Services Provided by Agencies and Programs Ranked by Number of Agencies		
Treatment/Therapy Services	Number of Agencies	Number of Programs
Parent Training	7	20
Nutritional Counseling	7	8
Counseling	6	14
Educational (Special Instruction)	6	13
Physical Therapy	4	7
Assistive Technology	4	6
Nutritional Treatment	4	4
Speech Therapy	3	7
Occupational Therapy	3	6
Medical Treatment	3	5
Family Therapy	2	5
Play Therapy	2	5
Immunization	2	3
Dental Treatment	1	1

### Educational Development Services

Educational Development services are offered by five agencies (Asheville City Schools, Blue Ridge Center, Buncombe County Child Development, Health Department and the Opportunity Corporation). The table below displays the number of agencies and programs providing Educational Development services. Table B-7 in the appendix identifies the specific agencies.

Table 5 Educational Development Services Provided by Agencies and Programs Ranked by Number of Programs		
Educational Development Services	Number of Agencies	Number of Programs
Fine and Gross Motor Skills	5	11
Social Skills (Behavioral, Interpersonal)	5	11
Cognitive (Educational Development)	5	10
Self-Help Skills (Dressing and Feeding)	5	10
Academic Readiness Skills	5	9
Language Acquisition	5	9

### Support Services

Support Services are offered by all of the agencies. The table below displays the number of agencies and programs providing Support Services. Table B-8 in the appendix identifies the specific agencies.

Table 6 Support Services Provided by Agencies and Programs Ranked by Number of Agencies		
Support Services	Number of Agencies	Number of Programs
Referral/Accessing Resources	8	36
Home Visitation	6	23
Co-Visitation with Client to Agencies	6	20
Treatment/Transition Planning	6	18
Transportation	6	17
Food and Clothing	6	11
Observation/Verification of Service Delivery	5	22
Health Care Education	5	12
Follow-up, Aftercare	4	16
Breastfeeding Encouragement and Support	2	7
Respite Care	2	3
Housing/Shelter	2	2

The ARC Work Group defined case management as the provision of all of the following support services:

- Co-Visitation with Client to Agencies
- Referral/Accessing Resources
- Treatment/Transition Planning
- Observation/Verification of Service Delivery
- Follow-up, Aftercare

Economic Assistance Services

Economic Assistance Services are provided by five agencies (Asheville City Schools, Buncombe County Child Development, Developmental Evaluation Center, DSS and the Health Department). The table below displays the number of agencies and programs providing Economic Assistance. Table B-9 in the appendix identifies the specific agencies.

Table 7 Economic Assistance Services Provided by Agencies and Programs Ranked by Number of Agencies		
Economic Assistance Services	Number of Agencies	Number of Programs
Emergency Assistance	2	3
Child Care Subsidy	2	2
School Health Money	1	2
Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC)	1	1
Child Support Enforcement	1	1
Children's Special Health Services	1	1
Food Stamps	1	1
Meal Cost Reimbursement	1	1
Medicaid	1	1
Vocational Rehabilitation	1	1
Special Supplemental Food Program for Pregnant Women, Infants and Children (WIC)	1	1

### Other Specialized Care Services

Other Specialized Care Services are provided by six agencies (Asheville City Schools, Blue Ridge Center, Buncombe County Child Development, Buncombe County Schools, DSS and the Opportunity Corporation). The table below displays the number of agencies and programs providing these services. Table B-10 in the appendix identifies the specific agencies.

Table 8 Other Specialized Care Services Provided by Agencies and Programs Ranked by Number of Agencies		
Other Specialized Care Services	Number of Agencies	Number of Programs
Intensive Residential/Day Services for Children with Severe and Profound Mental Retardation	3	3
Crisis Care (Temporary)	2	2
Custodial Care, Substitute Care	2	2
In-Home Family Preservation	2	2
Permanency Planning	1	1



























































