



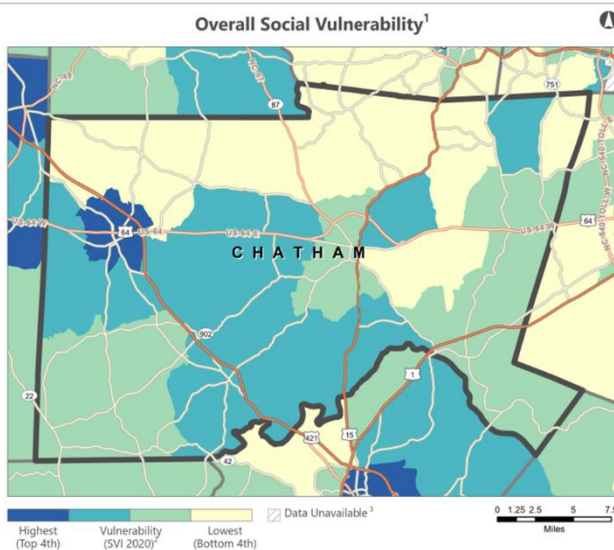
Chatham Kids Matter Community Conversations

Early Childhood Action Plan

chathamkidsmatter.org

Early Childhood Needs Assessment Findings

CDC/ATSDR Social Vulnerability Index 2020
CHATHAM COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA



Vulnerability Index of Chatham County
In the above map, yellow areas are the lowest vulnerability and blue areas the highest.

Growth

9% expected growth in the next 5 years, reaching **86,826**
15% growth for children under age 5 (to **3,771**)

Income & Migration

From 2019-2020, **2,370** new people entered Chatham County with an adjusted gross income of **\$128,569**
From 2019-2020, **1,615** people left Chatham County with an adjusted gross income of **\$92,232**

Affordability

The Living Income Standard for 1 adult and 1 child in Chatham County is **\$61,260**. Of this budget, the average cost of housing uses **23%** and the average cost of childcare uses **27%**.

Poverty

While **10.74%** of all people in Chatham County in 2020 were living in poverty, **20.64% of children under 6** in Chatham County lived in poverty.

Healthy Children

- Parents have difficulty accessing health services: health, mental health, & early intervention
- This could leave delays unidentified
- Early intervention is one of the strongest precursors to kindergarten readiness
- Research shows higher rates of social/emotional & mental health challenges since the pandemic
- Health disparities by race show more challenges for young African American & Latinx/Hispanic children than White children in Chatham County
- Only 55% of children 0-15 months are getting their well child visits
- 73% of children 3-6 years old are getting their well child visits
- 11% of children have limited or uncertain access to healthy, safe food
- In 2021, fewer children were receiving intervention services than in any of the last 10yrs
- African American infants are dying at **5.33x** the rate of White infants- NC rate is **2.67**
- Hispanic infants are dying at **1.7x** the rate of White infants- NC rate is **1.6**
- Low/very low birthweight rates are higher for African American newborns (**21.4%**) & Hispanic/Latinx newborns (**11.6%**) compared to non-Hispanic White newborns (**9.3%**)

Safe & Nurturing Families

- Parents say they need more child mental health & social emotional behavior support
- Parents have difficulty finding safe, secure, & affordable housing
- Parents are struggling to find the child care they need, especially for infants & toddlers
- There are limited resources for recreation & family activities, especially indoor options, & especially in more rural areas of the county

Adoption

In 2020, there were 129 children under age 18 in the foster care system in Chatham County. It takes an average of **2yrs, 4.6mos** (868 days) for children ages 0-3 to be adopted. It takes an average of **2yrs, 8.5 mos** (987 days) for children ages 4-5 to be adopted.

Early Learning & Education

- There are different understandings of what it means to be “ready for kindergarten”
- Child care is in short supply
- The cost of child care is a burden on families
- Providers are having difficulty making ends meet
- Child care workforce is dwindling & salaries are low
- Transportation is challenging for some families
- NC Pre-K hours do not fit work schedules
- Some parents do not trust child care centers or homes to safely & appropriately care for their children
- Hispanic families face additional language barriers

Child Care Providers

Chatham County has long waiting lists & limited options for child care: out of 29 provider surveys that we gathered, there was a waiting list of 401 children. This was especially so in certain areas of the county, for infant & toddler care, for after school care, and for care accepting subsidies.

Of 41 total child care facilities in Chatham County, 28 are child care centers and 13 are Family Child Care Homes. 22 have a 4 or 5 star rating (licensed capacity for 1,180 children at this level). The total licensed capacity is **2,069** children. Chatham County has approx. 3,554. Assuming approximately 80% of children from birth and five in Chatham County need child care, and controlling for the fact that providers are not able to serve their total licensed capacity by approximately 27%, **there is a gap of approximately 1,300 child care slots to serve the county.**

Child Care Workforce Crisis

- Fewer people entering the profession
- The profession needs a better reputation
- Existing staff move to higher paid positions in other centers and schools
- Low staffing leads to closing classrooms and affects the quality of care
- Caring, trusting staff is the highest ranked reason for selecting a particular child care option for parents
- Child care provider salary is **37%** lower than an elementary school teacher’s salary
- From 2020 to today: 4 child care centers and 4 Family Child Care Homes have closed and two centers have opened for a **net loss of 162 slots.**