

Our Next Steps



Launch the collective decision-making and implementation structure that centers equity and power sharing.



Prioritize strategies for action and identify the implementation partners.



Fundraise for the resources necessary to implement the prioritized strategies.

This plan is intended to be put into action. This will require deep relational work, uprooting persistent [mental models](#), challenging assumptions, and devoting funding and resources to implement the Durham ECAP recommendations. Implementing this plan will require all of us.

The planning process has engaged more than 1,300 people across Durham and to truly honor all that people shared, follow-through with implementation is necessary. It is also critical that traditionally under-resourced and undervalued community-rooted people and programs with trusted relationships with communities most impacted by the disparities in early childhood outcomes have a central role in leading, decision-making, and implementing - with resources allocated to those efforts.

“A common source of community trauma is the lack of commitment and long-term sustainability of many resources, programs, or other initiatives. Beyond financial resources, it is important to invest in community infrastructure, social capital, and the residents, as this is who and what remains after short-term funding sources are gone. Without this commitment, communities experience abandonment and feel used as individuals and organizations with a professional stake in their community pass through, taking what they need and leaving when resources dry up or they have met their short-term needs.”

– Urban Institute, Trauma-Informed Community Building and Engagement

The purposes of this plan are to:

- Align Durham's early childhood ecosystem around shared goals and strategies that address disparities in early childhood outcomes

- Center the lived experience of parents most impacted by the disparities in early childhood outcomes when making decisions about early childhood priorities and investment
- Strengthen accountability for addressing disparities in outcomes and for power-sharing in our early childhood systems
- Inform priorities and action of current collaborative efforts
- Focus and fuel fundraising efforts

To begin planning for implementation, ECAP stakeholders from across action planning teams, workgroups, review teams, and the governing body came together in a series of two meetings in April and June 2021 to:

- Gather perspectives, concerns and questions about Durham ECAP implementation
- Provide feedback and ideas on a [proposal](#) to:
 1. Establish a steering committee that represents the different perspectives and expertise in our Early Childhood community
 2. Identify a committee structure that will allow us to effectively collaborate on plan implementation, center lived experience, and reduce duplication of existing efforts (see Appendix C in the ECAP document “3. Our Process” for a list of existing, related taskforces)
 3. Decide what level of staff support is needed to guide plan implementation and what entity(ies) should play this role

The key themes of feedback shared at these meetings included:

- Balance the urgency of getting started quickly on implementing the strategies with the need to set up equitable structures for accountability, power-sharing, strategy prioritization, and fund allocation
- Need to be intentional about building and supporting a culture and systems of power sharing on the steering committee
- Need to be realistic about the time commitment for steering committee members
- Need to have a feedback loop / checks and balances with the communities most impacted by the disparities in early childhood outcomes
- There is a need for significant staffing and long-term funding to provide “backbone support” to facilitate: project management, authentic community engagement, partner engagement, communications, fund development, reporting, and evaluation.

Through the end of 2021, the ECAP Planning team (ECAP Program Manager at DCI, the Early Childhood Coordinator at Durham County, and two community advisors) will support the following implementation preparation activities:

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- Developing a representative ECAP steering committee (with a majority of membership being parents, front-line workers, and representatives of community-rooted organizations)
- Establishing a fund development committee to identify sources of implementation funding
- Learning more about collective impact models and identifying a model that is likely to work best in Durham
- With the steering committee: building relationships; setting principles for power-sharing and fund allocation; identifying the best long-term staffing structure for plan implementation; and prioritizing strategies for investment and action
- For the strategies prioritized by the steering committee: confirming implementation partners for each strategy; launching more detailed implementation planning for each strategy with those partners; creating cost estimates for each strategy; where possible, beginning implementation for prioritized strategies

Based on the comprehensive nature of the plan, to fully fund it would likely take tens to hundreds of millions of dollars. Cost estimates will be conducted as we prioritize strategies and conduct more detailed implementation planning with identified implementation partners. Funding will require braiding public, private, and philanthropic funding.

During discussions about ECAP implementation, participants shared concerns about how funds will be allocated and acquired equitably. The ECAP steering committee and the fund development committee will engage with these concerns about fundraising in more detail in the fall of 2021, taking the following types of considerations into account:

“How can we ensure that parents/people most affected have decision-making power re: final recs/funding allocation?” - ECAP Participant

“We need to make sure that we do not assume that an org is most fit to lead just b/c of its stature. Or that a person has the greatest expertise just b/c they have a certain academic degree. There are currently overlooked people/orgs who are actually most fit to lead b/c of their lived experience and connection to community. Remove the traditional checkboxes that create barriers to people being tapped for leadership and pay.” - ECAP Participant

“Funders contribute to duplication/silos. Equity funding ECAP is going to be VERY difficult, and require a lot of trust + buy-in from funders to partner/provide flexible funding.” - ECAP Participant

The Steering Committee and the ECAP Planning Team will consider the following questions:

- What are the priority strategies to raise funds for?
- How much funding is needed to implement the priority strategies?

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- How will we plan to weave together public and private funding
- Who will raise the funds?
- When a fiscal agent is needed, who will serve as the fiscal agent?
- Who will be accountable to the funder?

It's important to note that quite a few of the items in the plan are strongly in alignment with American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds and other federal COVID recovery allocations. There is an [estimated](#) \$51,881,733.00 total in American Rescue Plan funds that will be allocated to Durham. See analysis of funding alignment in Appendix A.

Appendix A

Many of the strategies that were identified to implement the ECAP recommendations align with intended uses of American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds. **Eviction prevention, increased funding for safe and affordable housing, food assistance, and workforce development are being lifted up in the ECAP and in the American Rescue Plan.** While these are not all specifically early childhood investments, they are beneficial to families with young children because of the particular economic strain they experience and the unique phase of brain development young children are in. There is a strong early childhood argument for making those investments.

In addition to those more universally beneficial investments, there are some examples of direct early childhood investments that seem to be ARP-eligible and that are aligned with our Durham ECAP recommendations. These are also aligned with Governor Cooper’s [recommended uses](#) of ARP funds.

Examples of ARP-Eligible Early Childhood Investments	ARPA Fund Use ⁱ	Aligned Durham ECAP Recommendation
Expand Durham Pre-K and promote more equitable access by providing funding for wrap care and transportation	Services for qualified census tract and other disproportionately impacted communities: addressing educational disparities through expanded early learning services	Invest in a sustainable child care system to provide high quality, culturally affirming, and developmentally appropriate early learning experiences that are affordable and accessible to all
Expand child care subsidy eligibility to increase access for infants and toddlers, families who are looking for work, and families who aren’t currently eligible but who can’t afford market rate child care	Services for qualified census tract and other disproportionately impacted communities: promoting healthy childhood environments through expanded high-quality child care	Invest in a sustainable child care system to provide high quality, culturally affirming, and developmentally appropriate early learning experiences that are affordable and accessible to all
Establishing a peer navigation program where people with lived experience and expertise in early childhood systems support families in	Addressing disparities in public health outcomes: community health workers/public benefits navigators	Increase resource awareness and create an easily navigable service system for families with young children

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connecting with early childhood services		
Cash payments to families during pregnancy and when their child is young to promote increased economic security for families and reduce stress	Addressing negative economic impacts: assistance to households through cash assistance	Ensure families with young children have economic security and opportunities for wealth-building and long-term economic prosperity
Increase funding for culturally affirming and community-rooted prenatal and postpartum mental health and peer support services	Enhance behavioral and mental health services: mental health treatment; improving the design and execution of health and public health programs: targeted consumer outreach	Ensure families have access to convenient, affordable, preventative, and responsive maternal and child healthcare
Invest in the development or dissemination of a culturally-affirming social-emotional curriculum that can be adapted for use in ECE and early elementary settings	Services for qualified census tract and other disproportionately impacted communities: addressing educational disparities through services that support students' social, emotional and mental health	Ensure birth through 3rd grade learning environments are trauma-informed, culturally affirming, gender affirming, and focused on social-emotional health
Expand home visiting, parent/child therapy, and parent education services for families with young children, with a focus on services that reflect the communities they serve	Services for qualified census tract and other disproportionately impacted communities: promoting healthy childhood environments through home visiting programs	Promote preventative and responsive approaches to foster social-emotional, mental health and resilience of young children and their families

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References

ⁱ National Association of Counties (NACo). "NACo Analysis of the American Rescue Plan Act." (Summer 2021). Retrieved from: <https://www.naco.org/resources/naco-analysis-american-rescue-plan-act>.