

Durham ECAP Steering Committee

*Assembled to Guide the Implementation of
“Grown in Durham: Durham County’s Early Childhood Action Plan”*

CHARTER

Last updated on March 4, 2022

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1. Durham ECAP Steering Committee Overview

In 2019, the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services released [North Carolina's Early Childhood Action Plan \(ECAP\)](#). The plan sets forth a bold vision for North Carolina's children, focused on making steady progress towards achieving ambitious goals relating to children's health and development, safety and well-being, and learning.

Building off this statewide work, Durham is now the first county in the state to create an ECAP specific to our community. "[Grown in Durham: Durham's Early Childhood Action Plan](#)" is a community plan that was released in September 2021 after a year of county-wide, collaborative planning with families, community leaders, early childhood providers, and early childhood system leaders across Durham. The plan serves as a blueprint for strengthening our early childhood systems in Durham to ensure that Durham is a place where all children can thrive.

The Durham Early Childhood Action Plan envisions a community where all Durham's children will get a healthy start and develop to their full potential in safe and nurturing families, schools, and communities. The plan identifies priorities for collective action and funding to strengthen our early childhood systems in the areas of maternal and child health, early care and education, family support, and basic needs.

1a. Steering Committee Purpose

The purpose of Durham's ECAP Steering Committee is to guide and advise the implementation of Durham's Early Childhood Action Plan (ECAP).

1b. Steering Committee Membership

This steering committee has 36 seats and intentionally prioritizes the perspectives and expertise of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) parents¹, parents with other marginalized identities (LGBTQ+, low-income, etc.) and representatives of community-rooted organizations.²

¹ We will use the term parent* to refer to any individual who is parenting a child—this can be a biological parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, other family member, godparent, older sibling, guardian, foster parent, adoptive parent, or anyone who is the primary caretaker for the child.

² "Formal and informal groups that are owned, run, and operated by the people that live and work within their own communities. These organizations are not only run by the most impacted within the community context but they are directly accountable to their neighbors and members. They can operate as a non-profit, for-profit, faith community or other organized formal or informal community group. The main identifier is that the board, staff, and

The steering committee also builds on the power, resources, and expertise of representatives of institutions in our community.

The 36-seat membership includes:

- [7] Parents of young children (primarily BIPOC or other marginalized identities)
- [7] Community-rooted leaders
- [7] Front-line early childhood providers (teachers, community health workers, doulas, etc.)
- [7] Nonprofit leaders
- [7] Institutional leaders
- [1] Business leader

Steering Committee Members (October 2021 through at least April 2023)

Primary Representation	Steering Committee Member
Parents of Young Children	Jawanna Bell
	Yesenia Carlon Gonzalez
	Kelly Cosby
	Sonia de la Cruz
	LaShay Richards
	Elizabeth Shatzer
	Tamara Vanie
Community-Rooted Leaders	Wanda Boone
	Lourdes Carbajal Pena
	Tammy Ferrell
	Kimberly McCrae

mission and vision were created and owned by those living within the community they are focusing their work or have been directly impacted by the area or context in which they serve.” (Source: Camryn Smith, edited by Niasha Frey, MPH, via the Durham Racial Equity Taskforce Report)

	Terryca Taylor
	Randy Trice
	Chi Vo
Front-Line Early Childhood Provider	Ashley Bass-Mitchell
	Beth Branciforte
	Wilmarie Citron-Tyson
	Susana Diaz
	Maya Jackson
	LaRhonda Leslie
	Rochelle Sanders
Nonprofit Leaders	Meytal Barak, <i>Book Harvest</i>
	Katharine Cannon and Karen Appleyard Carmody, <i>Center for Child and Family Health</i>
	Linda Chappel, <i>Child Care Services Association</i>
	Zulaykha Clemons-Dunn, <i>Exchange Family Center</i>
	Danielle Johnson, <i>Durham's Partnership for Children</i>
	Tasha Melvin, <i>Families Moving Forward</i>
	David Reese and Ellen Reckhow, <i>Durham Children's Initiative</i>
Institutional Leaders	Debi Best, Ellie Erickson, and Lindsay Terrell, <i>Duke Children's Primary Care North Durham</i>
	Jess Bousquette and Meghan Brown, <i>Durham County Health Department</i>
	Cathy Collie-Robinson, <i>Durham Technical Community College</i>
	Sue Cotterman, <i>Durham Public Schools</i>
	DeDreana Freeman, <i>Durham City Council</i>
	Berkeley Yorkery, <i>Duke Center for Child and Family Policy</i>

Business Leader	Matt Williamson
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1c. Steering Committee Terms

The inaugural Steering Committee commenced September 2021. Each steering committee member will serve an 18-month term (until March 2023), with an option to extend to 24-months (until September 2021). The goal is to have staggered terms to ensure continuity of shared understanding and culture amongst steering committee members.

Steering committee members have an option to extend for an additional 2-year term. Steering committee members (as individuals, not as organizations) may serve a maximum of two terms (4 years maximum).

If a seat is vacated early, the outgoing steering committee member has the opportunity to nominate someone to replace them to represent their seat (as a parent, a community-rooted leader, etc.). Members vacating a seat from a nonprofit or institution should meet with their organizational leadership to nominate someone from their agency. If the person vacating is sharing a seat with another person from their organization, the organization has an opportunity to either have the remaining member finish out the term alone or nominate an additional person to share the seat. The full steering committee needs to approve the nomination in the next steering committee meeting.

At the expiration of members' terms, a public steering committee nomination process commences to fill the open seats. This process will include public outreach through the ECAP newsletter listserv in addition to other outreach lists such as the Partnership for a Healthy Durham, the Department of Social Services, Child Care Services Association, Families and Communities Rising, the Durham parent Facebook groups, and more. A physical flyer can also be placed in clinics, schools, child care centers and homes, and other places where families frequent.

The nomination process will mirror the nomination process for the inaugural steering committee which took place in July-August 2021. The ECAP Support Team will lead this process.

1. 1-month open nomination process which collects information from nominees including contact information, demographics, commitment to the role and associated responsibilities, and their responses to open-response questions about motivations, lived or professional experience related to the parts of the plan, and commitment to power sharing and key values of the steering committee

2. Assemble nomination review team which consists of 4-6 parents, front-line providers, and/or community-rooted leaders from the outgoing steering committee
3. Nomination review team to review the nominations (2-4 weeks recommended)
4. Nomination review team to discuss and propose steering committee members (2-4 weeks recommended)
5. Outgoing steering committee approval needed for proposed new membership

The nomination review team will consider the following criteria when reviewing nominees:

- Lived and professional expertise in all goal areas of the plan represented
- Diversity - Socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, family structure, disability status, etc.
- Commitment to racial equity and power sharing
- A majority of people on the steering committee should identify as being a parent of a young child in Durham
- A majority of people on the steering committee should identify as being long-term residents of Durham (>10 years)
- Representation from institutions and nonprofits in the community who serve large numbers of families

2. Steering Committee Values, Commitments, and Responsibilities

2a. Durham ECAP Steering Committee Grounding Values

1. All children in Durham deserve to thrive
2. We are all experts in early childhood
3. We must address the root causes of oppression (namely, racism, other forms of discrimination, individualism, and poverty) that hold our children and families back
4. Everyone has a role to play to change outcomes for kids and families
5. We must recognize our various social identities, how they interact, and how they impact our work together and in the community
6. We use that self-awareness to share power

2b. Steering Committee Responsibilities

MAKE DECISIONS ABOUT HOW THE PLAN IS IMPLEMENTED

- Make decisions about how to bring the plan to life, including what strategies are high priorities, which groups should implement or scale strategies that the steering committee prioritizes, and how the work is funded
- Decide how the plan is staffed—which group(s) will guide the overall work together with the steering committee
- Approve and annually amend the Steering Committee charter to determine how the group will work together, make decisions, and share power

ENSURE COMMUNITY ALIGNMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY

- Build bridges to the community to consistently gather input and represent new perspectives
- Hold implementation partners accountable for the work they agree to do on different ECAP strategies
- Provide oversight and accountability for the ECAP Support Team through an annual review process at the end of each calendar year
- Keep the committee up to date about new priorities and opportunities in the community—make decisions to change ECAP priorities as needed
- Connect the work of existing early childhood groups to strategies in the plan

SUPPORT FUNDRAISING EFFORTS

- Together with partners, help raise money for the strategies in the plan
- Make sure that the work of community-rooted groups is a priority for funding

2c. Steering Committee Member Commitments

Upon accepting their nomination to the ECAP steering committee, members commit to:

PARTICIPATE FULLY IN THE STEERING COMMITTEE

- Serve for an 18-month to 24-month commitment with the possibility to serve for one more consecutive term. If a person serves for an 18-month term and decides to step away, they will need to go through the next eligible nomination process to be considered for another term on the steering committee.
- Spend ~5 hours per month in meetings and ~5 hours per month doing individual work related to the Durham ECAP
- Complete all prep work in advance of meetings and the action steps that come after meetings
- Attend all full steering committee meetings and smaller team meetings*
- Share with your organizational counterpart after each meeting if you are sharing a seat on the committee to represent an organization or institution

PUT OUR GROUNDING VALUES INTO PRACTICE

- Make decisions in service to our shared mission to ensure Durham is a place where all children can thrive; setting aside personal or organizational interests to make these decisions
- Learn about the full Durham ECAP in order to make decisions that take the full breadth of the plan into account including child and maternal health, basic needs, early care and education, social-emotional health, and community wellness and safety
- Share power with all members of the committee
- Practice an openness and willingness to learn from the rich lived and professional experience represented on the committee; and to shift our mindsets based on what we learn together
- Communicate openly and transparently
- Make decisions in pursuit of racial equity, justice, and liberation, and learning from community-rooted leaders about how best to do so
- Value and trust community leadership
- Reach out to your community to bring new ideas and perspectives to the steering committee

**When unable to attend a meeting, please follow these steps:*

1. Contact the ECAP Support Team (bonnie.delaune@dci-nc.org) to let them know
2. Review all meeting recordings, minutes, and materials after the meeting

**In the event that you cannot participate fully in the Steering Committee, we may need to fill your seat in order to ensure that we have many perspectives represented in the 36-person steering committee meetings. We will take the following steps:*

- After missing 2 meetings in a year, the ECAP support team will reach out to see how we can support your participation
- After missing 3 or more meetings in a year, the ECAP support team will reach out to ask about nominating someone else to sit in the seat

2d. ECAP Support Team's Commitments to Steering Committee Members

*In order to support the participation of steering committee members, the ECAP Support Team commits to:**

VALUE EVERY MEMBER'S TIME

- Pay all community-rooted leaders, front-line workers (teachers, community-health workers, doulas, etc.), and parents of young children for the time and expertise they bring to the steering committee³
 - \$250/monthly stipend for ~10 hours per month (\$25/hr)
 - Checks are issued on the 15th of the month for the previous month
 - If you need to update your address please email bonnie.delaune@dci-nc.org
- Consider building in future budget to provide for organizational stipends

PROVIDE TECHNICAL SUPPORT

- Provide support and training, where needed, to ensure people have the shared knowledge required to make important decisions
- Provide training and support for institutional members in sharing power
- Enable participation in other languages by working with a language justice expert to design multilingual spaces, translating all materials, providing live, simultaneous interpretation to enable two-way exchange wherever possible
- Support steering committee members with community outreach by providing necessary materials, incentives for participation via gift cards (limited supply), and translation or interpretation as needed

³ Contingent on funding. At first this funding is from Durham County, but the ECAP Fundraising committee may need to raise these funds in the future.

COMMUNICATE OPENLY AND TRANSPARENTLY

- Communicate transparently about the processes, decision-making power, and next steps
- Ask for feedback along the way to check-in with committee members about the workload, committee dynamics, etc., to adjust work and expectations as needed
- For those individuals "sharing" a seat on the committee, the ECAP support team commits to sharing meeting minutes that summarize the discussion, the decisions made, and the action steps

FACILITATE COLLABORATIVE, EQUITABLE MEETING SPACES

- Design meetings that foster collaborative work and intentionally avoid perpetuating [white supremacy culture](#) by:
 - Offering multiple ways for people to make their voices heard (sharing anonymously, in small groups, etc.)
 - Helping make space for voices that are underrepresented in the conversation
 - Being attentive to the fact that this is a multi-lingual, multi-generational group and that folks may face barriers to participation due to familial responsibilities, personal commitments, and connectivity
 - Allowing flexibility with the agenda to make space for important conversations
 - Being respectful of steering committee members' time, understanding we all have full and valuable lives
 - Offering structure to move things forward, knowing these issues are urgent, but recognizing that the inequities in early childhood are persistent and it is important to take the time to build relationships and value many perspectives and alternatives
- Share power amongst members of the ECAP Support Team, as well

**The work of the ECAP Support Team is contingent on continued backbone funding.*

3. Steering Committee Approach to Working Together

3a. Steering Committee Approach to Power Sharing

The Durham ECAP Steering Committee seeks to share and generate power between families, community-rooted leaders, and front-line early childhood professionals who have been historically left out of decision-making power in Durham, with the nonprofit and institutional leaders who have more often held decision-making power. We believe that together we are stronger and will make more sustainable, equitable decisions in the name of ensuring all families and young children in Durham can thrive.

In addition to commitments stated above to operationalize our grounding values, we will also seek to intentionally share power by:

- Approaching our conversations with an “abundance mindset”— there is an abundance of power to be shared, divided, and re-allocated, but this power can also be additive and multiplicative
- Being transparent with one another about the personal and organizational motivations, connections, and knowledge that may influence our collective decision-making
- Continuously asking ourselves how we as individuals and as a steering committee can support and shift power to non-dominant groups
- Prioritizing the voices of people with lived experience in decision-making
- Choosing to invest in community-rooted programs that have historically been devalued and underfunded, but are providing critically important, culturally affirming support to families

In pursuit of power sharing, we seek to avoid these common pitfalls:

- Centering our own organizational or individual priorities in decision-making instead of thinking about Durham's children and families
- Centering our ideas, vision, priorities, agenda, plans, and way of doing things when coming up with and implementing solutions
- Seeing the norms of dominant culture as "the right way" of doing things
- Assuming that processes followed in the past are good ideas just because they were seen as good ideas in the past
- Taking critiques of the early childhood system personally
- "That's just the way it is"
- Talking about equity without actually making changes to further equity

- Holding a belief that only organizations with a certain stature or individuals with a certain degree or title are experts
- Disengaging because the work feels hard
- Not trusting the ideas, recommendations and thought leadership of community-rooted leaders
- Not willing to let go of control, even when it might be best for the early childhood system to change in ways that are more equitable

To check-in with steering committee members and to hold ourselves accountable, there will be a survey 2x per year administered by the ECAP support team to anonymously check-in with members. The results of this survey will be shared at a steering committee meeting with an opportunity for open discussion to address areas of concern.

3b. Steering Committee Meeting Guidelines

In order to operationalize equity in our meetings and avoid the common pitfalls above, we will abide by the following meeting guidelines:

RESPECT YOURSELF AND EACH OTHER

- Listen to and value the unique perspective that each individual has to offer to make Durham a better place for children and families.

EMBRACE YOUR CURIOSITY

- Ask questions about what isn't clear to you and assume good intentions.
- Question your own assumptions.

SHARE SPACE

- Step up, step back.
- Use the "raise hand" Zoom feature to avoid talking over one another.
- Lift up the perspectives of community-rooted leaders and parents whose voices have historically been undervalued.

SPEAK PLAINLY

- Avoid acronyms and jargon.

ENCOURAGE A SAFE (AND BRAVE) SPACE

- We are learning and growing together – call "in" instead of calling "out."
- What is said here stays here.

3d. Steering Committee Decision Making Process

In order to operationalize equity in our decision making, we will follow the below process, while also being open to amending it and adapting it based on our lessons learned.

STEP 1. COLLECTIVELY DEVELOP PROPOSALS

- Collectively develop proposals that are brought forth for approval
- Ensure that anyone on the Steering Committee who wants to shape the proposal has an opportunity to do so

STEP 2. ASSESS READINESS TO MAKE A DECISION

- Achieve group consensus that we are ready to make a decision (thumbs up, sideways, or down from all members in attendance)
 - Quorum: In order to move forward with a decision, we need 1) at least two thirds of the full ECAP Steering Committee in attendance (24 out of 36) and 2) at least two thirds of community-rooted leaders, frontline providers, and parents in attendance (14 of 21) in order to center lived experiences of marginalized populations who are represented on the steering committee.
- Address any concerns raised by the people who do not think we are ready

STEP 3. APPROVING A PROPOSAL

- Abstain from participating in decision-making if you have a conflict of interest (e.g. receive compensation from or are a board member of an org involved in the vote)
- Trying to reach consensus on the decision itself
- Our definition of consensus: “Even though the decision might not be exactly what I want, I can live with it and publicly support it.”
- Revise proposal as much as we can until we reach consensus using tools like [“gradients of agreement”](#)
- Where consensus not possible, a proposal can pass a steering committee vote (conducted after the meeting to include those who could not attend) with:
 - 85% overall participation of eligible steering committee members who are not abstaining (31 of 36 members⁴) AND 85% participation from community-rooted leaders, frontline providers, and parents (18 of 21 members)

⁴ Will follow-up with each member who was not in attendance individually through their preferred communication method in order to share the information needed to vote.

- At least 66%⁵ of all votes cast (e.g. at least 24 of 36 who voted); and
- At least 66%⁶ of the votes cast by community-rooted leaders, frontline providers, and parents in attendance (e.g. at least 14 of 21 who voted), in order to center lived experiences of marginalized populations who are represented on the steering committee.

3e. Steering Committee Approach to Moving Through Conflict

As we seek to find consensus to reach collective decisions, we expect conflict to emerge and believe that we can move through conflict together in a healthy way that can result in stronger, more equitable decisions. We see conflict as an opportunity for growth, learning, and deepening connection. Having a shared understanding and possible tools in our “toolbelt” will help us all navigate through challenging conversations together.

While we have grounding values and meeting agreements in place to create space for meaningful exchange, we understand that different perspectives and approaches can create uncomfortable situations. Rather than ignoring this discomfort, we hope that we can use these moments to address any harm that has been caused and to identify ways to move forward together.

In order to do so, we hope that we can share an understanding that conflict is a natural and expected part of social change. As such, we hope that all steering committee members:

- Practice self-awareness about your social identities, how they intersect, and how those identities are associated with power in an exchange
- Build emotional capacity to move through conflict with others, knowing that the conflict is about deeper issues, not about you personally
- Respect all perspectives and assume good intention
- Question your own assumptions, embrace complexity, and seek critique

When conflict arises, steering committee members will seek to:

- Remember that we all share the same belief that children and families in Durham deserve to thrive; our disagreement arises from a difference in perspectives on how that will happen
- Stay focused on the issue at hand rather than the person
- Use “I” statements to speak from your own experience

⁵ Will round up or down appropriately when 66% of the total electorate does not equal a whole number.

⁶ Will round up or down appropriately when 66% of the total electorate does not equal a whole number.

When conflict arises, the ECAP Support Team and any other facilitators may employ any number of the following tools and techniques to hold space for conflict:

- **Group discussion:** Talk through the disagreement and process it together; giving space for each perspective share where they are coming from personally
- **Caucusing:** small group discussions in breakout rooms by racial/ethnic identity, role on the steering committee, etc. in order to create safe space to debrief
- **Storytelling:** members of the steering committee can tell stories that elaborate on their perspectives in order to promote deeper understanding and build empathy
- **Clarifying the conflict with involved parties:** use breakout room or small meeting after the group meeting to clarify the conflict with the involved parties if it does not warrant a group discussion
- **Perceptions exercise:** Ask each group to think about how they view themselves, how they view another group, and how they think another group perceives them
- **Fish-bowl method:** one group meets in the center and talks about their views on the conflict while the other groups sit in an outer circle to watch and listen, and then all the groups come together to discuss their observations and experiences

Our goal as a collective is to:

- 1) Be non-judgemental in acknowledging the conflict
- 2) Identify the root causes of the conflict
- 3) Identify what we need in order to work together to manage or eliminate the causes of the conflict
- 4) Envision what could be possible by working together

4. Process to Amending the Steering Committee Charter

4a. Annual Review

The charter will be reviewed by a subcommittee of the steering committee annually. That group should comprise at least 1 parent, 1 frontline early childhood provider, 1 community-rooted leader, 1 nonprofit leader, and 1 institutional leader. Below are the proposed steps to update the charter annually (by end of the calendar year):

1. The ECAP Support Team will conduct a steering committee meeting activity to review the charter.
2. The subcommittee of the steering committee will review the comments made by the group and propose changes.
3. Those changes will be brought to the full steering committee for decision making (see section 3d).