



# State of the Young Child in Transylvania County

*December 2015*

## Summary

This report cites numerous data sources to illustrate what it is like to be a citizen in the age range of 0-5 in Transylvania County. While no report can be completely exhaustive in data collection or in listing existing community resources and programs, this report attempts to give as close as possible to a complete picture.

The Preschool Task Force hopes that you will take the time to read this report and understand the lives of our youngest citizens. If after seeing this report, you are inspired to get involved, please contact Transylvania County Administration at (828) 884-3100 or [trisha.hogan@transylvaniacounty.org](mailto:trisha.hogan@transylvaniacounty.org) and ask to be added to the Preschool Task Force mailing list.

## Background

One of the greatest indicators of overall quality of life for a population is the quality of life of the most vulnerable populations within that community. Children under 5 years of age depend completely on family and community to provide the right start and ensure that developmental milestones are being met. Early environment has a lasting impact on the development and life of each child and is also a factor in that child's future economic success.

Making sure that children have the right environment to learn and develop is not only an ethically sound practice, but it is also critical to the community's economic development. Parents in the workforce today need quality child care in order to be productive at work, and children are the workforce of the future.

*A population that does not take care of the elderly and of children and the young has no future, because it abuses both its memory and its promise.*

— Pope Francis

Economists nationwide are weighing in on the importance of children to the economy. Art Rolnick and Rob Grunewald of the Minneapolis Federal Reserve Bank have conducted extensive research on the return on investment in early childhood education, finding a 16% return on

investment with 80% of the benefit going to the general public. Stated otherwise, they found a rate of return of \$8 for every \$1 invested after adjusting for inflation, and \$6.5 of those return dollars benefitted the general public.

Other economists are starting to cite the nationwide decline in birth rate as a warning for our future economy. Dowell Myers, director of the Population Dynamics Research Group at the University of Southern California says the declining nationwide birthrate is creating an imbalance in the economy, with a growing gap between working age populations that fund social programs and populations that are dependent on those programs. He argues that this gap makes investment in early learning critical to ensuring that the future workforce, while smaller, can sustain economic vitality.

In early 2015, Transylvania County Commissioners Page Lemel and Mike Hawkins began discussions about concerns being raised by citizens regarding the availability of child care, kindergarten readiness, and how services are coordinated for the youngest, most vulnerable members of our community. They requested that county administration bring together service providers for children in the 0-5 age group for a discussion on the needs of this population in Transylvania County.

The first workshop was held in spring 2015 to brainstorm topics of concern and to illustrate and define what it is like to be a child in Transylvania County. At that time, the group agreed to meet monthly for three months to gather data on different topics and continue the discussion to shape a picture for the public of the lives of children in this community.

This report is a result of this collaborative effort and is intended to use data to identify needs so the task force can begin developing ways to improve and better serve our citizens. Some of our children live in environments that are unable to support the developmental milestones needed for a successful school career and life. Our community has an opportunity to support these children and families to secure our collective future and stem the tide of growing social service demands.

*There can be no keener revelation  
of a society's soul than the way in  
which it treats its children*

—Nelson Mandela

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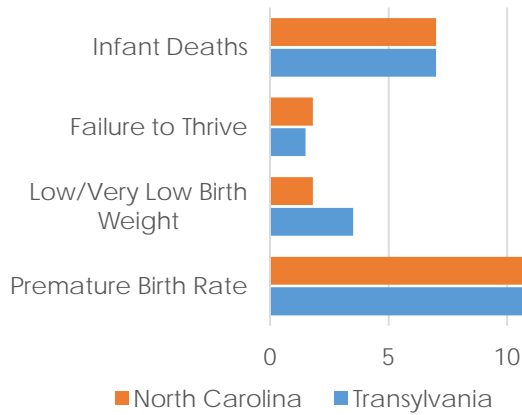
## Health/Mental Health

### Birth and Infant Mortality

A total of 285 babies were born to Transylvania County residents in 2014 (State Center for Health Statistics). In general, our birth statistics are similar to those seen across the state. The county rate of infant deaths was 7 per 1,000 live births in 2013, the same as the statewide rate (2014 NC Child Health Snapshot). In 2014, about 1 of 11 babies born to county residents had a low or very low birth weight, which is a

strong indicator of infant mortality (North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics). Failure to thrive for Transylvania County babies was reported at a rate of 1.5 per 1,000 compared to the state rate of 1.8 per 1,000 in 2009-2013. For the same time period, the county had a premature birth rate of 9.4 per 1,000 compared to the state rate of 9.5 per 1,000 (Transylvania Public Health).

Birth and Infant Health Outcomes, per 1,000 births



Prenatal care is offered by Brevard Health Center and Transylvania Community Hospital, but there is no birthing center located inside the county. Two different groups provide childbirth classes at The Family Place; prenatal classes and support groups are also available at The Center for Women.

### Teen Pregnancy

The county teen pregnancy rate is very similar to the statewide average. Transylvania County had a teen pregnancy rate of 34.4 per 1,000 compared to the state at 34.9 per 1,000 for 2009-2013. Repeat teen pregnancies are lower than the state average, with 15.3 per 1,000 teen mothers having a repeat teenage pregnancy in the county compared to the state rate of 26.3 per 1,000 for the same time period (Transylvania Public Health).

To raise teenage awareness of the demands and responsibilities of having a child, Transylvania County Schools offers the “Baby Think It Over” program to all 9th grade students, which requires providing care for a mechanical baby for a single weekend..

Brevard Health Center offers free pregnancy tests to anyone, including teenagers, to encourage early prenatal care. Transylvania Public Health also offers confidential pregnancy tests and contraceptive services to anyone of

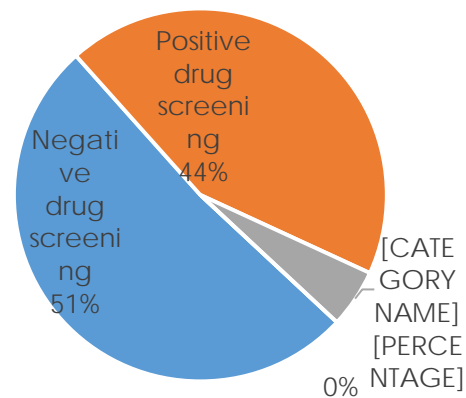
childbearing age; services are provided on a sliding scale fee and are typically free for teenagers who have little or no income.

### Prenatal Substance Abuse

Substance abuse has been identified as one of the top three public health concerns in Transylvania County. A healthy start is important to the growth and development of a child, and prenatal substance abuse directly impacts infants at an extremely vulnerable developmental period.

Transylvania Public Health provides Pregnancy Care Management for women who are eligible for Medicaid and are likely to have poor birth outcomes. In 2014, out of 138 women receiving these services, 67 women had a positive drug screening in the obstetrician’s office or at delivery, which could be caused by using prescribed medications or street drugs. Of those with a positive drug screening, 7 were enrolled in a treatment program or were seeking medical care for addiction at their initial prenatal appointment (Transylvania Public Health).

Drug Screening Results Among Pregnancy Care Management Clients



Knowing the exact number of Transylvania County infants born addicted to opiates can be difficult: babies are evaluated after birth for symptoms of opiate withdrawal, but a low

Finnegan score may not be flagged as a substance abuse problem. Transylvania Public Health also provides supportive services for children with special health care needs, and reports that the number of babies receiving services due to substance exposure has grown over time.

The chart below displays the last five years of data for babies who were monitored or treated for Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome, and shows a drastic increase over the past three years. Note that these counts are based on the year of the baby's birth, but treatment courses may cross over calendar years, with typical weans lasting 16 weeks or longer to taper medication so that withdrawal impacts are minimized.

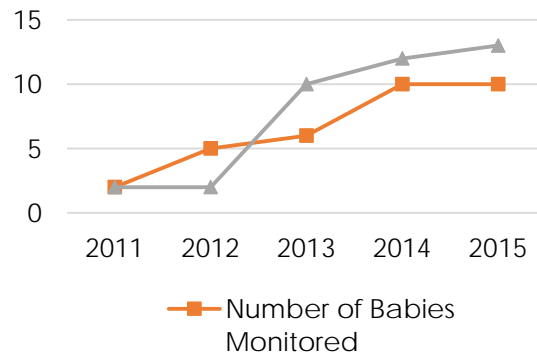
As of October 2015, 17 of the 35 infants enrolled in the Care Coordination for Children program in Transylvania County were undergoing treatment for opiate withdrawal symptoms. (This point-in-time number includes babies at all stages of treatment, some of whom were born in 2014 and are still undergoing treatment, and others born more recently.)

Based on the number of infants born in 2014 and the number of babies identified with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome in 2015, Transylvania County's projected rate would be around 4,560 per 100,000 births, which is more than 7 times the statewide reported rate for Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome of 620 per 100,000 live births in 2012 (North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics).

In reporting year 2013-2014, Transylvania County Department of Social Services had 9 children removed from their homes with drug addiction as a key factor in removal.

Substance abuse referral services are provided by Smoky Mountain LME/LMO for Transylvania County to contracted providers. However, health care providers note that opioid addiction is rising and the nearest treatment clinic is located in Buncombe County, creating a challenge for transportation for those mothers who are willing to seek treatment.

Babies Monitored and Treated for Neonatal Substance Addiction by Year, 2011-2015



The C.A.R.E. Coalition, a local recipient of multi-year federal Drug Free Communities funding, is committed to creating environmental change using research-based activities that result in reduced youth substance abuse and related risky behaviors. To date, the coalition has conducted parenting classes, media campaigns, policy reviews, and community and youth training opportunities. They have supplied overdose-reversal naloxone kits and home medication lockboxes and have worked to create community collaboration among stakeholders to address high overdose rates and newborn addiction, among other concerns.

### Mental Health

Mental health coordination services are provided for Transylvania County residents by Smoky Mountain LME/LMO. However, because it is a rural county, resources for children are limited and insufficient access to mental health services for parents is likely to have an impact on the mental health of young children as well. Western Carolina Community Action (WCCA) has indicated interest in hiring a behavioral specialist as a resource to support child care centers.

Hendersonville Pediatrics (which has an office in Brevard and serves most county residents) has access to a children's mental health provider with a clinical psychologist on site one day a week. Carolina Pediatric Therapy has a Brevard office and offers behavioral health therapy

services for children. Brevard Health Center offers counseling, psychology, and crisis walk-in services for mental health issues and serves clients regardless of their ability to pay. RHA Mobile Crisis Management is a regional group that serves Transylvania County for behavioral health emergencies.

### Special Needs

The Local Interagency Coordinating Council (LICC) is a state-mandated organization that works together to assist families of young children with disabilities and special needs. Members include parents, infant/toddler and preschool early intervention service providers, and other agency and community representatives who have an interest in helping young children and families. The LICC provides screening clinics, training, and acts as a resource for families who need early intervention services.

Transylvania County Schools has a program to identify preschool age children with special needs so they can receive early intervention services. The Family Place in Rosman offers a support group once a month for families with special needs children.

(Additional information on how special needs are being met can be found in in the preschool education section of this document.)

### Immunization Rates

Transylvania County provides immunizations to the community and reports immunization rates for children 2 years of age and younger. From October 2012 to October 2013, 83% of children in Transylvania County were up to date on vaccinations or in compliance but late receiving vaccinations according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's definitions. This exceeds the 2015 state goal of 76% established by the North Carolina Department of Public Health.

### Breastfeeding

Transylvania Public Health encourages mothers to breastfeed their infants and provides breastfeeding support to mothers enrolled in their Women, Infants, Children (WIC) supplemental nutrition program. Clients in the Transylvania County WIC program had a breastfeeding initiation rate of 76.5% compared to the statewide rate of 58.6% for fiscal year 2013. WIC participants reported maintaining breastfeeding for the recommended 6-month period at a rate of 31.8% compared to the statewide rate of 20% for fiscal year 2012.

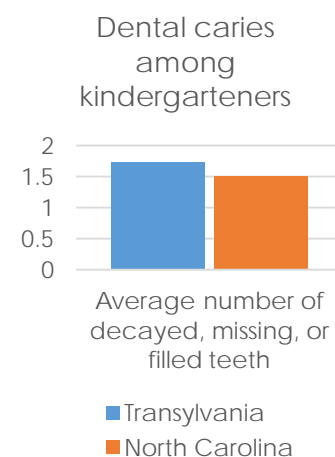
Other support resources for breastfeeding moms include a group that meets monthly at The Family Place and a breastfeeding/postpartum support group starting in December 2015.

### Dental and Vision Screening

Dental caries are the most common chronic infectious disease among children. The average number of decayed, missing or filled teeth among kindergarteners in Transylvania County is 1.73 compared to the state average of 1.5.

However, 51% of children ages 1-5 who have Medicaid coverage do not use any dental services despite qualifying for care (Transylvania Public Health).

Transylvania Public Health has a part-time dental hygienist who provides oral health education and screenings for preschoolers and elementary students; she assessed 737 children in 2014, and 96% of children enrolled in Head Start received dental screenings.





For regular dental check-ups and treatment of dental concerns, local private dental practices offer care, but availability is limited for Medicaid patients. Brevard Health Center provides dental care for children age 3 and older, regardless of ability to pay; wait times for a dental appointment are typically around 90 days. School-aged children can also receive dental services during spring and summer break via the Toothbus from Mission Children's Hospital.

Children ages 0-5 who see a primary care physician are typically screened for vision problems during well child visits. In addition, 100% of children enrolled in Head Start had recently completed vision screenings.

## Access to Health Care

In 2013, 8.8% of children in Transylvania County were uninsured compared to 7.4% statewide (NC Child Health Snapshot). Both Transylvania County Department of Social Services and Transylvania Public Health have programs to connect client children with insurance coverage.

Blue Ridge Community Health provides health care services to both insured and uninsured individuals, regardless of ability to pay. The Brevard location serves behavioral health, medical, and dental clients in the 0-5 age range. They have seen 43 unique patients in the 0-5 age category, including 1 for behavioral health, 23 for medical, and 21 for dental services.

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## Early Education and Child Care

Quality child care is a piece of social infrastructure that is required in order to maintain an adequate workforce. The current economic environment requires the majority of families to have two parents in the workforce. The cost, quality, and availability of child care are factors that influence whether parents are able to continue working and can influence decisions when candidates are recruited for work within a community.

There are 9 full-time regulated child care centers/preschools and 1 family child care home located in Transylvania County. As of September 2015, the NC Department of Health and Human Services reported 274 children (17 of whom were infants) enrolled at in these licensed centers out of approximately 1,500 children ages 0-5 living in the county; 249 of those children are enrolled in four- and five-star facilities as defined by the NC DHHS system.

The Transylvania County Schools Preschool Program (Hand In Hand Preschool Resources) contracts for 14 slots with New Adventure Learning Center and 6 slots at Rosman

Children's Services (WCCA) to ensure that 3- to 5-year-olds with the most significant special education needs have access to quality preschool instruction. North Carolina Department of Public Instruction funds these developmental day slots through Transylvania County Schools, providing just under \$1,000 per child per month. This program requires the teacher to hold a birth-kindergarten license and lowers the classroom teacher/student ratio from 1:9 to 1:6.

Other children identified through the program who are not candidates for developmental day slots are served through an itinerant teacher or related service provider (speech, occupational, physical therapist) either in the preschool setting provided by their families or at the Hand In Hand Preschool Resources Office located at Brevard Elementary School. This level of service is typically offered 1 or 2 times per week depending on the child's level of need. Approximately 50 children are served in this program per year, all of whom are children ages 3-5 with identified special needs in Transylvania County.

In addition, Transylvania County has 4 part-time, church-based preschool programs (which typically operate from 9 am to 12 pm) and 1 non-traditional drop-in center. These providers reported enrollment of 255 children in September 2015, according to a report from Transylvania County Smart Start. Only one part-time church preschool program provides infant care with a maximum of 6 children.

For individuals who are interested in operating a child care business, Self Help Credit Union has a special lending program. They offer a special low fixed interest rate and a Child Care Resource Loan Fund is available to guarantee the loan for those who may not have the collateral to back the business loan. Self Help Credit Union also sponsors a training program called the Business Side of Child Care that helps prepare business owners through qualified trainers throughout the North Carolina. These programs are intended to encourage business development for child care providers to increase availability and quality.

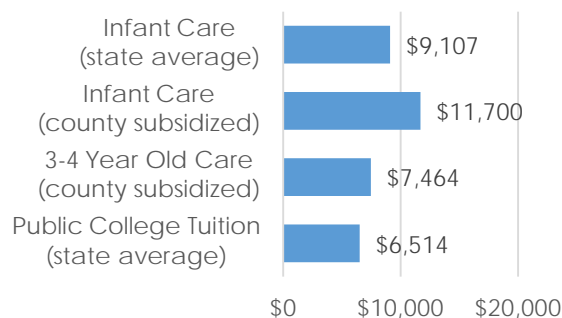
### Child Care Expenses

The average cost of child care in 2013 in North Carolina was \$9,107 for an infant (Child Care Resource and Referral Network). Based on state median income estimated by the 2010 Census, child care for one infant would cost 12.3% of a two-income median family (\$73,953) or 42.3% of a single mother's median income (\$21,550).

Transylvania County Department of Social Services receives state and federal child care subsidy funds that can only be spent for parents working or enrolled full-time in school. These funds total \$965,952 per year, with an additional \$82,500 from SmartStart.

In Transylvania County, the subsidized market rates for center care published for January 2016 range from \$7,464 for 3-4 year olds to \$11,700 for infants making Transylvania County the 6<sup>th</sup> highest for child care expenses in the State. (NC Department of Health and Human Services). Based on Transylvania County's 2014 estimated

Annual Child Care Costs



median income of \$41,952 (Access NC), it would cost around 27.8% of a two-income middle class family's gross income to have one child in a child care center and over half of the family's gross income to have two children in care.

Compare these costs to annualized rent payments of \$9,132 or annualized mortgage payments of \$15,204 in North Carolina. In fact, parents can expect to spend more for one year of child care than a year of tuition at a public college or university. The average cost to attend a public college in North Carolina in 2014 was \$6,514 per year or 40% less than the average cost of infant care (Parents and the High Cost of Childcare).

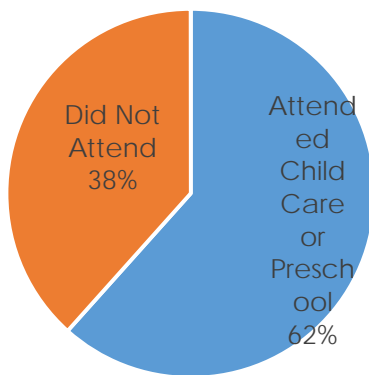
### Literacy and Kindergarten Readiness

Education today has changed, with greater demands on meeting academic standards at an early age than in the past. It is very important that children entering kindergarten today be prepared for the start of a rigorous curriculum by already having the necessary developmental building blocks in place.

Kindergarten readiness is tested in the public school system during the third week of school to give teachers a snapshot of whether those building blocks are present. Transylvania County Schools reported that 78% of kindergartners tested below or far below proficiency at the beginning of the school year in 2015. Brevard Elementary and Rosman

Elementary had the highest percentages of students below or far below proficiency. Of 245 kindergarten students who enrolled this year, 151 attended some kind of preschool or child care and 94 did not. Transylvania County Schools have not traditionally captured detailed data at kindergarten registration regarding what kind of pre-kindergarten education children have received, but began to collect this data in the 2015-2016 school year. Next year, Transylvania County Schools will have data showing if children who attended certain programs have better testing scores once they begin school. This information can reveal which educational environments result in student success and will be helpful as we work to improve kindergarten readiness efforts.

Child Care or Preschool Attendance by 2015-2016 Kindergarten Students



NC Pre-K is a state-funded effort to help children in high-risk environments prepare for kindergarten. The program is administered by the Department of Health and Human Services at the state level and serves four-year-old children with the goal of enhancing kindergarten readiness. Locally, the program is administered through Transylvania County Smart Start and can enroll 56 children.

Western North Carolina Community Action provides programs in Transylvania County including Early Head Start, Head Start, and an in-home program that sends a teacher to work directly with families on a weekly basis. Head

Start currently serves 47 children in county child care centers, as well as 18 in Early Head Start, 24 in NC Pre-K, and 15 Early Head Start at EHS childcare partners.

There are a number of community efforts to advance early literacy for those in the 0-5 age group. Smart Start of Transylvania County hosts the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, which enrolls children to receive age-appropriate books via mail. In September 2015, Smart Start reported 438 children currently receiving books and 1,046 children having graduated from the program. Of 262 incoming kindergartners, 52 had received books in 2014. Evaluating which children received books should help Smart Start collaborate with schools to reach more children before they enter kindergarten.

Hendersonville Pediatrics offers patients the Reach Out and Read Program, an evidence-based program for early literacy that provides about 10 books per child along with demonstrations for parents on how to introduce their child to reading. Rosman Elementary distributes CDs to parents with reading coaching techniques to support early readers. The Family Place offers early learning resources for parents and caregivers who stay at home with children, with facilitated two-hour playgroups that have specific interactive activities and include story time and a snack.

The Transylvania County Library supports early literacy development in many ways, including the Every Child Ready to Read program and weekly pre-school programs for babies, toddlers, and preschoolers that develop emergent literacy skills. Although many children use a parent's library card instead of registering for one separately, as of 2015, 82 preschool children and 755 elementary school children had their own library cards. Juvenile circulation totaled 9,604 books in fiscal year 2015 (an increase in print circulation), and circulation of Tumble e-books for children was 2,000 and rising. The library also hosts a summer reading program each year that is promoted through the public school system to keep children engaged



in reading over the summer; 595 children participated in 2015.

To provide access to books for all ages, the library operates a bookmobile that makes

scheduled stops at child care centers, community centers, senior centers, and other locations. Transylvania County Schools keep school libraries open year round for students to maintain access.

## Family Life and Poverty

### Transportation

Rural counties struggle to provide solutions for residents who do not have their own transportation because it can be a challenge to make services cost efficient over remote areas.

Transylvania County has limited public transportation with an on-demand scheduled trip system at a cost of \$1 for each one-way trip. Parents who need to use public transportation with young children have access to one van with car seats, if it is available for the requested time and location; they must schedule trips at least one day in advance by calling the county transportation department. With the exception of scheduled medical appointments for people who meet requirements, there is no public transportation out of county to access services that are not available in Transylvania County.

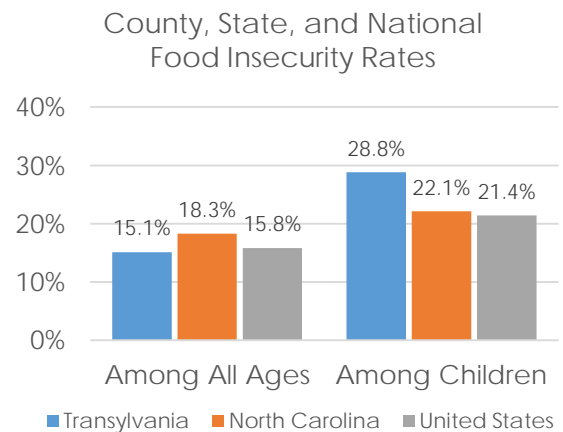
One van transports children to and from Head Start for preschool. The van can only hold 9 or 10 children in car seats because it must include an adult rider in addition to the driver, and currently serves 8 children. Children must live in the more developed area of Brevard to access the service.

Some child care programs have access to other forms of transportation specifically associated with the program that are not included here.

### Food Insecurity

Food insecurity is defined by the USDA as “a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food.” Overall, Transylvania County has a food insecurity rate of 15.1% compared to the state

rate of 18.3%. However, Transylvania County children have a food insecurity rate of 28.8%, which is higher than both the state (22.1%) and national (21.4%) rates for children (Feeding America). One can infer from those rates that children are more likely to be food insecure than adults in Transylvania County.



Feeding America also estimates that 21% of the county’s children who are food insecure do not qualify for federal nutrition programs.

Transylvania County Schools reports the rate of students who qualify for free and reduced lunch at 58.42% in FY 14-15 compared to the statewide rate of 52.83%.

Transylvania Public Health offers the Women, Infants, Children (WIC) supplemental nutrition program, which had a caseload of 649 families in fall 2015.

The Hunger Coalition of Transylvania County was created in 2014 to develop collaboration among existing food pantries and identify needs to match with resources for areas that are underserved. This coordinative effort is

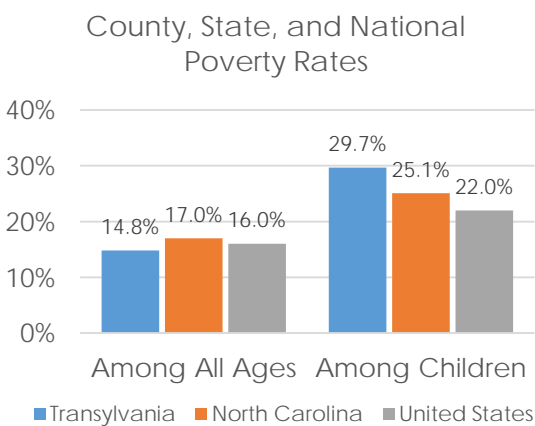
intended to eliminate duplication and strengthen the framework of those addressing hunger in the county while also raising awareness. Partners include Transylvania County Schools, the Transylvania Farmer’s Market, Anchor Baptist Church, the Sharing House, Bread of Life, and other local food pantries.

### Financial stability

Financial stability is important for access to resources for families, and it can also impact stress within the home, thereby impacting a child’s mental, physical, social, and emotional development.

The Department of Labor estimates the median worker in Transylvania County earned \$22,034 in 2013, while the median worker in North Carolina earned \$27,425. The median household income was estimated at \$46,556 for North Carolina in 2014 and \$41,952 for Transylvania County.

According to U.S. Census Data, Transylvania County had a household poverty rate of 14.8% compared the statewide rate of 17% in 2013. However, 29.7% of children ages 0-18 in Transylvania County live in poverty, which is much higher than the household poverty rate and has increased 33% since 2007 (NC Child).



Furthermore, there is much discussion about how the real cost of living in our community compares to the federal poverty guidelines. A

Michigan Institute of Technology study on the living wage calculates that a household with two adults and two children in Transylvania County would need both adults to earn an hourly rate of \$13.96 in order to afford necessary expenses including housing, food, transportation, and child care. Based on this estimate, a family would need to earn almost three times the poverty rate (which is around \$5 per hour for a family of four) in order to live independently.

The 2010 U.S. Census reports that 34.1% of all families in Transylvania County have children living in the home; 3.6% of those households have children who are unrelated to the head of household. The census also reports that 11.5% of Transylvania County families with children under 18 have incomes below the poverty level, 8.4% of family households are supported by single females and have children under the age of 18, and 57.9% of families with children under age 6 in Transylvania County have all parents in the home in the labor force.

The Cindy Platt Boys and Girls Club of Transylvania County served more than 570 school-age children through afterschool and summer programs in 2015. Data collected by the club in 2014 showed statistics that may be useful: 38% of club members live in single parent households and 70% of members qualify for free and reduced lunch. Of the 215 members who attend the club on average each day, approximately 50 of them (23%) eat dinner at the club before they go home.

### Homelessness

Homelessness can be difficult to count because the numbers change and populations can be fluid. A point-in-time survey by North Carolina Coalition to End Homelessness in 2015 showed 18 children under the age of 18 as homeless in Transylvania County. The number of homeless children may be growing, as a similar count in 2009 showed 8 homeless children under age 18. In 2014, Transylvania County had one of the higher rates of child homelessness west of Buncombe County with a rate of .32% rate; only Swain County had a higher rate at .35%.

The Transylvania County Coalition to End Homelessness was formed in March 2012, with members that include the United Way, Sharing House, Transylvania County Department of Social Services, Transylvania County Schools, Project Connect, The Brevard Housing Authority, Meridian Behavioral Health Services, Smokey Mountain Services, Brevard Police Department, Transylvania County Sheriff's Department, and SAFE. The coalition applied for and received a Rapid Rehousing Program grant from HUD that funds programs to move individuals and families from homelessness to housing.

The Haven opened in November of 2011 and has served more than 375 people to date. Since January 2012, the Haven has served 42 children ages 0-5. The Haven Family House opened in June 2014 in response to a community need to serve families with children, and has served 78 people including 45 children since opening. The family house can hold 5 families; it has been at capacity since it opened and there is currently a waiting list of 10 families. As of November 2015, the average stay at the Family House is 99 days.

Sharing House provides Transylvania County residents living in poverty with food, clothes, and some financial assistance, as well as educational programs and seasonal gifts.

SAFE offers emergency shelter and case management services to women and children who are victims of domestic violence.

### Provision of Care

Transylvania County Department of Social Services provides programs that support children and families, including Child Support Enforcement, Work First Employment Services to remove barriers to becoming employed, Child Protective Services Assessment and

Remediation, and both Foster and Adoptive Care.

In 2013-2014, 9 children were removed from their homes due to substantiations of abuse and neglect, and 25 parents of children with open cases at DSS were listed as incarcerated.

In August 2015, 43 children were in foster care in Transylvania County; 10 of these were 0-5 years old. More than half of foster care placements (24 of 43) were in kinship care. DSS also reported 38 children receiving in-home services that month.

Parenting classes were ordered by either the court system or DSS in 57 cases that year. The Children's Center of Transylvania County offers a Nurturing Parenting Program that lasts 48 weeks and meets court requirements. Parenting classes are also available at the Family Place. Their Incredible Years Program was funded by state contract with additional funding for one additional cohort in spring 2015 provided by local Smart Start. The Family Place is also offering two sessions of parenting classes beginning in January 2016, one for parents of preschoolers and another for parents of school-age children. This program lasts 14 weeks, and child care and dinner are provided. It is not part of the court-ordered programming. This class has been offered with a book in Spanish, but not with a class translator. The Family Place also hosts support group meetings and "parent chats" to offer additional parenting resources.

Parenting classes for expectant mothers are also offered at the Center for Women, where a professional counselor also offers free counseling services. SAFE offers once-a-month, standalone parenting classes that are open to everyone but mainly geared towards teen moms. Meridian also offers Nurturing Parenting Program classes that are ongoing but can be tailored to certain durations to meet court or DSS requirements.

## Recreation

Recreational opportunities provide children 0-5 with activities that can enhance their development. Transylvania County is blessed to have a robust network of federal, state, county, city, school and community center park facilities. Approximately half of the county's land area is designated as parkland. Within these recreational areas, there are opportunities for families to seek exploration of natural resources while enjoying physical activities together.

Several playgrounds are located at county, city, and school facilities throughout the county, including a new playground at Silvermont Park operated by Transylvania County Parks and Recreation and specifically designed for preschool-aged children. The county has two public swimming pools that have wading pools for young children.

Transylvania County Parks and Recreation offers some programming for children ages 0-5, including gymnastics taught by a private contractor at the county recreation center facility and their T-ball program for children under the age of 5. Transylvania Youth Soccer Association offers soccer for 4 and 5 year olds.

The Transylvania County library previously partnered with Transylvania Public Health to

provide a Music and Movement Program before state funding was restricted.

The Pisgah Center for Wildlife Education holds a monthly story and craft time for children called Nature Nuts geared towards pre-K through 2nd grade.

The Family Place has begun hosting a program for a fee taught by a local instructor who also offers the class at St. Philips church. The Family Place also hosts play-based experiences at their facility for families, as well as a group for dads and children.

Swimming lessons for young children are available at Brevard Health and Racquet Club during the summer. Two dance companies in the community offer classes for preschool-age children: Brevard Ballet School and Pisgah Dance Academy.

Other opportunities for recreation with at least some activities that are designed for young children include the annual street festivals hosted by the Heart of Brevard, as well as other community events, such as the Easter Egg Hunt by the Ladies Auxiliary of VFW Post 4309, fall festival events at local churches, and Breakfast with Santa sponsored by Transylvania County Parks and Recreation.

## Task Force Participants: Thank You!

The Preschool Task Force responsible for gathering the data in this report and facilitating discussion around these issues is committed to working collaboratively to take the next step and identify ways to address the issues that are unique to our community.

Please take time to thank the individuals and agencies listed below for their time and contributions and for their current role in serving Transylvania County's 0-5 year olds.

**Anders, Cindy**

*Transylvania County  
Department of Social Services*

**Aull, Judy**

*United Way*

**Beaver, Hannah**

*Blue Ridge Community Health  
Services/Brevard Health Center*

**Brock, Erika**

*Transylvania County Library*

**Canon, Ann**

*NALC*

**Carland, Shelia**

*United Way*

**Castro, Joe**

*Smart Start of Transylvania  
County*

**Dalton, Will**

*Hendersonville Pediatrics,  
Child Psychology*

**DePina, Betty**

*WCCA HS/EHS*

**Dixon, Carleen**

*Transylvania County  
Parks and Recreation*

**Drew, Erin**

*The Family Place*

**Farash, Ann**

*Hendersonville Pediatrics*

**Ferguson-Fisher,  
September**

*Smart Start of  
Transylvania County*

**Gardner, Laura**

*Transylvania County Library*

**Gash, Stacey**

*WCCA*

**Griffin, Carson**

*Transylvania County  
Department of Social Services*

**Grimm, Barbara**

*Brevard Academy*

**Hagedorn, Annelise**

*Penn State*

**Hawkins, Mike**

*Transylvania County  
Commissioner*

**Kilgore, Tommy**

*NAACP*

**Lambert, Amanda**

*Transylvania Public Health*

**Laughter, Jaime**

*Transylvania County Manager*

**Lee, Nan**

*EE/SLPD*

**Lemel, Page**

*Transylvania County  
Commissioner*

**Marr, Barbara**

*United Way*

**McMinn, Lee**

*Interested Individual*

**Nebbrig, Judy**

*Community/El Centro  
Hispano*

**Norman, Shelia McBee**

*Rise & Shine Freedom School*

**Parker, Kae**

*Child Development Center  
(retired)*

**Pulliam, Steve**

*United Way*

**Reneau, Audrey**

*Transylvania County Schools*

**Russell, Elaine**

*Transylvania Public Health*

**Schieve, Linda**

*CDSA*

**Schieve, Ron**

*Connect*

**Strassner, Cathy**

*United Way*

**Vargas, Rodrigo**

*El Centro Hispano*

**Walsh, Candice**

*Cindy Platt Boys & Girls Club  
of Transylvania County*

**Weaver, Cameron**

*Transylvania County Schools*

**White, David**

*WCCA HS/EHS*

**Williams, Kathie**

*Children's Center*

**Yount, Anna**

*Transylvania County Library*



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