



## **Onslow County Schools Head Start and Family Development Program Community Assessment**

**2015-16**

The vision of Onslow County Schools Head Start and Family Development Program embraces the model of excellence for other Head Start Programs in North Carolina. Our mission is to ensure that preschool age children are “school ready” as they transition to kindergarten, thus enhancing the opportunity for a successful school career.

Our program goals support our vision for excellence and ultimate mission to prepare children for lifelong learning:

- Establish a supportive learning environment for children, parents and staff, in which the processes of increasing awareness, refining skills and expanding understanding are valued and promoted.
- Recognize that the members of the Head Start community have roots in many cultures. Head Start families and staff, working together as a team, can effectively promote respectful, sensitive approaches to diversity issues.
- Understand that the empowerment of families occurs when program governance is a responsibility shared by families, governing bodies, and staff, and when the ideas and opinions of families are heard and respected.
- Embrace a comprehensive vision of health for children, families, and staff, which assure that basic health needs are met, encourages practices that prevent future illnesses and injuries, and promotes positive, culturally relevant health behaviors that enhance life-long well-being.
- Respect the importance of all aspects of an individual’s development, including social, emotional, cognitive and physical growth.
- Build a community in which each child and adult is treated as an individual while reinforcing a sense of belonging to the group.
- Foster relationships with the larger community, so that families and staff are respected and served by a network of community agencies in partnership with one another.

- Develop a continuum of care, education, and services that allow stable, uninterrupted support to families and children during and after their Head Start experience.

## **Participants in the Process**

Onslow County Schools Head Start Program utilizes multiple resources in compiling information for a valid and accurate Community Assessment. The Onslow County Partnership for Children, a non-profit agency that administers an array of services for children and families, continues to provide us with valuable statistics about the health and welfare of children in the county.

Having completed a Community Assessment as required by Early Head Start as well, OCPC had a wealth of information they were able to share. Other data collections were completed through various sources including Onslow County Schools Strategic Plan, the Onslow County Health Department, US Census Bureau, and Division of Social Services, the North Carolina Division of Health and Human Services and multiple online web resources.

The community assessment team and other Head Start staff members were instrumental in collecting and analyzing the data. Parents and community agency representatives from the Policy Council assisted in the collection of data as well. Parent committee members and parents in classrooms completed surveys related to the Title I and Head Start Programs that assist staff as parent trainings and staff trainings are planned.

The community assessment, together with the self-assessment and the PIR is used to determine the direction the program will go in the next years, and the objectives to be pursued. These instruments are also used to complete the Training and Technical Assistance plan for the next program year.

## **Program History**

The Onslow County Schools Head Start Program is entering its fifteenth year of operation. The program was awarded to the Onslow County Schools system after being in operation as the

Duplin-Onslow-Pender Community Action Agency for many years. Following the closing of that program, grants were awarded to each county school system to operate the program.

Head Start enrollment was expanded in 2004 from 200 to 230 slots to include eligible three year olds. The Onslow County Schools Head Start program currently serves 230 students in seven sites in all areas of the county.

The program serves mainly four year old students, but does serve selected eligible three year old students. Based on the attendance area of eligible three year olds, we have established three year old classrooms and/or combination three and four year old children's classrooms at varied preschool sites. Selection criteria is reviewed annually and revised as necessary to address the changing needs of the community. This year we have added statements for criteria regarding food stamps and or education status while maintaining the same point value, just increasing the opportunity to receive the points for eligibility. Preference is given to eligible four year old children who will be attending kindergarten the following year. In 2010, a Memorandum of Understanding was established with Early Head Start to provide a smooth transition for three year olds who meet eligibility criteria into Onslow County Schools Head Start program. The MOU was renewed for the 2015-2016 School year.

### **Location of Centers**

Dixon Elementary School-2 Blended HS Preschool Classrooms (Holly Ridge)

Hunter's Creek Elementary School-2 Blended HS Preschool Classrooms (White Oak)

Morton Elementary School -2 Blended HS Preschool Classrooms (White Oak)

Queen's Creek Elementary School-4 Blended HS Preschool Classrooms (Swansboro)

Southwest Elementary School-3 Blended HS Preschool Classrooms (Jacksonville)

Summersill Elementary School-5 Blended HS Preschool Classrooms (Half Moon)

Thompson Early Childhood Center -11 Blended HS Preschool Classrooms, Preschool Intake Office, Support Staff Offices (Jacksonville)

## Onslow County Townships: Service Areas



### About Onslow County

Onslow County is located on the coast of North Carolina and encompasses a total area of 909 square miles (767 square miles of land and 142 square miles of water). Onslow County is situated on the eastern coast line of North Carolina, approximately 120 miles east of Raleigh and 50 miles north of Wilmington. Military installations cover approximately 156,000 acres of the county. The county seat and largest city is Jacksonville, the 14<sup>th</sup> largest city in North Carolina. Onslow County is home to the incorporated towns of Holly Ridge, Richlands, Swansboro, North Topsail Beach and a portion of Surf City. The July, 2015 projected county population, from the state demographer, is **194,625** (NC State Data Center, July 2015 projection). According to the official military population statistical report as of June 30, 2015, **152,182** residents of Onslow County are military related, including **43,505** on active duty. Onslow County is one of the youngest counties in North Carolina due to the influence of the military presence.

The median age of Onslow County residents is **26.3** and the population of the 0-2 age **range is 12, 755** (NC State Data Center, July 2015 projection).

**Demographics of children currently enrolled in the Onslow County Schools Head Start Program for 2015-16:**

Total students currently enrolled-230

Black students:	76
White students:	83
Native Am. students:	14
Asian students:	0
Other:	8
Multiracial students:	49
(Hispanic Ethnicity	42 of 230 enrolled students)
Males:	121
Females:	109
Two parent families:	100
Single parent families:	113

Onslow County Schools also operates a Title I preschool program, and an Exceptional Children's preschool program, serving approximately 300 children. Onslow County Partnership for Children, administrator for the NC Pre-K program, initially awarded Onslow County Schools Preschool program 18 slots for eligible four year olds in the school district which now has increased to 259 slots. (The former More at Four Preschool Program which was administered by Onslow County Schools dissolved in July 2011) The North Carolina General Assembly transferred the More at Four Pre-Kindergarten Program to the Division of Child Development and Early Education in the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services and renamed it the NC Pre-Kindergarten Program (NC Pre-K). The NC Pre-K slots are dual enrolled with the Title I, Exceptional Children and Head Start students to maximize resources in the classrooms. All preschool programs are braided to maximize resources and funding. Utilizing all four funding sources for the majority of the classrooms has enabled us to provide the least restrictive environment for all students.

There are three self-contained Exceptional Children classrooms for students who, because of extensive issues are better served in that environment. All classrooms are served by a teacher with a minimum of a bachelor's degree, and at least one teacher assistant who has obtained a CDA credential, an associate's degree in early childhood education or a bachelor's degree.

Other Head Start staff that avail us the opportunity to meet the educational needs, health and mental health needs include 3 education specialists, 4 family specialists, 1 family specialist/coordinator of mental health services, and 1 EC disabilities coordinator. The number of preschool personnel continues to grow in service areas dependent upon various factors that impact the effectiveness of our program. For example, an increase in the number of children qualifying for Exception Children services may expanded the number of classrooms as the school year progresses. Patterns of growth with much success are evident since Onslow County Schools was awarded the Head Start program in the 2000-01 school year.

### **Program Attendance Area**

The Onslow County Schools Head Start Program operates a center-based program throughout the Onslow County Schools attendance area five days a week for at least 6 hours each day and at least 160 school days each program year. In gathering information through the years, the need for center based programs has always outweighed any request/data of need for home based services. Families need quality care and education for their children as they return to school or enter the work force. The rapid growth of the military community, which is primarily young singles and families, has increased the need for child care slots beyond what is available and affordable. The K-12 education community supports early quality intervention and education services for our most at risk children and families to help prepare students for academic and social/emotional success in kindergarten and beyond.

Preschool classrooms are housed at schools in each township; these locations allowed services to be accessible to the greatest number of families. Preschoolers housed in the outlying schools are transported by Onslow County School buses.

Costs for transporting students continue to escalate; thus it will continue to be a priority to plan transportation services that will enable the most students to be transported at the most reasonable cost for the Head Start program. Although we do serve the entire county, population shifts and school district requirements make it necessary to adjust locations as needed. For the 2016-17 school year, more adjustments may be made to accommodate large wait lists at some locations. Two classrooms are projected to be moved from Summersill back to the Richlands district.

### **Onslow County Demographics**

Located on the coast of North Carolina, Onslow County encompasses a total area of 909 square miles (767square miles of land and 142 square miles of water). Onslow County is situated on the eastern coast line of North Carolina and is the proud home of US Marine Corp Base Camp Lejeune which is the largest amphibious Marine base in the world covering 156,000 acres. Onslow County dramatically changed with the creation of Camp Lejeune in 1941. (Onslow County, NC Gov) The base and surrounding community is home to an active duty, dependent, retiree and civilian employee population of 152,182. (Data from Official Military Statistical Report as of June 30, 2015)

Onslow County includes the incorporated towns of Holly Ridge, North Topsail Beach, Richlands, Swansboro, and a portion of Surf City, unincorporated Sneads Ferry and the city of Jacksonville, the county seat. Onslow County Schools is a growing school system and is currently among the fifteen largest systems in the state of North Carolina.

Our local community and school communities have a strong collaborative relationship, working together to provide an atmosphere of support for educational innovation and opportunity for all students. (Onslow County Schools Website) The transient student population of Onslow County Schools is a direct result of the large military community served by our system. Approximately 10,400 students enrolled in Onslow County Schools have a military connection either through uniformed services or civil service positions. According to the State of The Community Report 2016, Onslow county schools over the last three years has continued to grow by 300-350 children, leading to the decision to have to redistrict middle and high schools. Onslow County Schools is currently, 2016, at 26,000+ students.

Onslow County has a population of 187,589, (2010-2015) an increase of 7.4 % since the year 2008 (165,000) according to the 2008 US Census Bureau (Fact Finder 2010) and an increase of 18.2% since the year 2000 (150,355). With a steady increase, the population estimate for 2011 was 179, 719. (Onslow County quick Facts from the US census Bureau) Named for President Andrew Jackson, Jacksonville, our county seat, was incorporated in 1842.

With our region's obvious growth, the Onslow County School system has had to anticipate and maintain this growth with adequate classroom space for our county's youth.

The Onslow County School system is divided into seven districts: Jacksonville, Commons, Richlands, Southwest, Dixon, Swansboro, and White Oak. The 2014-2015 student population is approximately 26,010. Serving these communities are 37 educational facilities which include 20 elementary schools (six contain preschool classrooms), 8 middle schools, 7 high schools, 1 early childhood development center, and 1 alternative learning center. With the passage of a 90 million dollar bond referendum in 2005, the citizens of Onslow County recognized the need for expanded classroom space, enhanced technology, and the addition of two elementary school sites. The newest school, Stateside Elementary School on Gum Branch Road, opened its doors in the fall of 2009. (Onslow County Schools website)

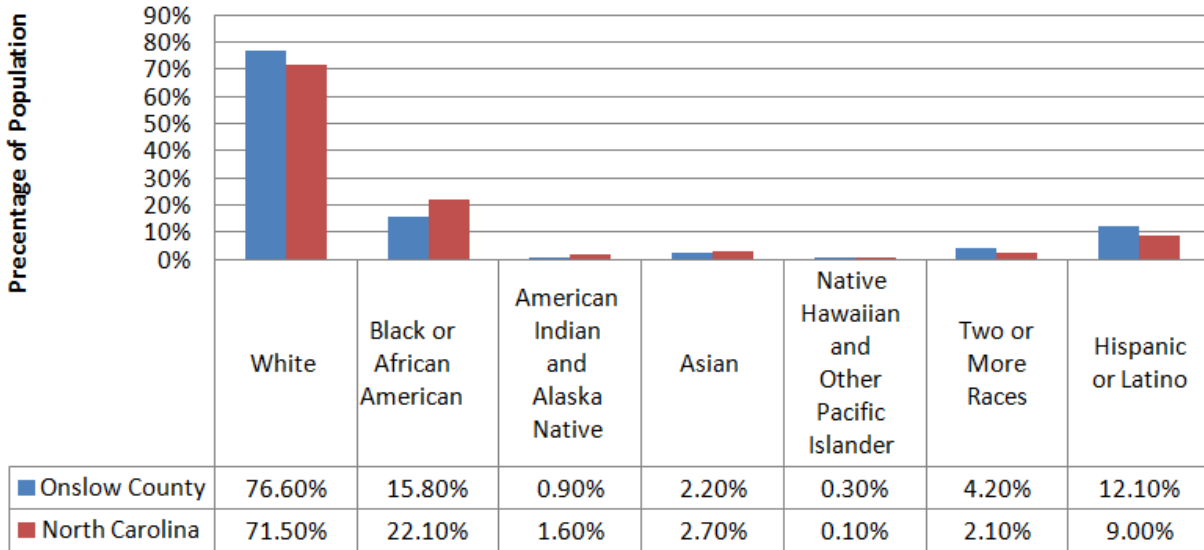


**Onslow County Demographics by Race: US Census Bureau American Fact Finder 2013**

Total population:	177,772	2013	2010	2008
Percent African-American	27,672	15.8	15.6 %	7.4
Percent Native American	1,238	0.9	0.7%	0.8
Percent Asian	3,355	2.2	1.9%	2.0
Percent Multiracial	7,751	---	4.4%	2.9
Percent White	131,590	76.6	74%	71.2%
Percent Hispanic	7,896	12.1	10.1%	7.1%



**2014 Onslow County/ North Carolina  
Race/ Ethnicity Distribution**

U.S. Census Bureau, Onslow County Quick Facts



Regarding languages spoken, **98.3%** of county residents speak English very well (American Community Survey, 2013). Of the very small percentage of residents who do not speak English very well, the vast majority speak Spanish. Other languages spoken are identified as Indo-European, Asian and Pacific Island languages.

**Demographics/statistical information of Onslow County that influence the need for Early Head Start will be listed by category. All demographic/statistical information must be kept in perspective within the context of the military presence and Onslow County being one of the youngest counties in the state, with a median age of 26.3.** At the conclusion of each topic area of data presented, community resources are identified.

Median resident age:  25.0 years  
 North Carolina median age:  35.3 years

Males: 95,349  (53.6%)  
 Females: 82,423  (46.4%)

**Major employers in Onslow County include:**

Employer	Rank	Employment Range
Department of Defense	1	1,000+
Onslow County Board of Education	2	1,000+
Camp Lejeune Marine Corps Community Services	3	1,000+
Walmart	4	1,000+
Onslow County	5	1,000+
Onslow Memorial	6	1,000+
Coastal Carolina Community College	7	500-999
Convergys's Customer Management Group	8	500-999
Food Lion	9	500-999
City of Jacksonville	10	500-999
McDonalds Restaurants of NC	11	250-499
Coastal Enterprises of Jacksonville	12	250-499
SAG Payroll LLC	13	250-499
Stanadyne Corp	14	250-499
Nextlink of NC, Inc.	15	250-499
Bell America Group, LLC	16	250-499
Wendy's Old Fashioned Hamburgers	17	250-499
Marine Federal Credit Union	18	250-499

Lowes Home Center Inc.	19	250-499
The Wood Company (A Corp)	20	100-249

Source: NC Employment Security Commission: www.ncesc.com, 09/2015

The primary industry in Onslow County is the military. Onslow County is home to headquarters for Marine Corps Installations East (MCI East), and there are two Marine Corps installations located in Onslow County, Marine Corps Base (MCB) Camp Lejeune and Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) New River. Other major employers include Onslow County Schools, Onslow Memorial Hospital, Onslow County, Wal-Mart, Coastal Carolina Community College, Convergys Customer Management Group, City of Jacksonville, Food Lion, McDonald's, Coastal Enterprises of Jacksonville, Lowe's Home Centers, Principle Long Term Care, Marine Federal Credit Union and Wendy's (NC Dept. of Commerce, 2014).

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The demographic makeup of Head Start eligible children and families can be summarized as follows: (NC Child Advocacy Institute, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, Onslow County and Partnership Level Data)

Other employment and income related data includes the following:

- Median family income: **\$45,450** ( U.S. Census Bureau, Onslow County Quick Facts, 2009-13)
- Unemployment rate: **5.2%**, (NC Dept. of Commerce, April, 2015)
- Percent of Onslow County children living in poverty **20.5%** (U.S. Census Bureau American Fact Finder, 2013)
- Percent of Onslow County residents living below federal poverty guidelines: **15.2%** (U.S. Census Bureau American Fact Finder, 2013)
- Percent of children age 18 and younger living in households who receive some kind of public assistance: **18.1%** (American Community Survey, 2013)

**Employment related and financial assistance resources:**

- Coastal Carolina Community College: Provides opportunities to obtain an Associate of Arts degree or many vocational training programs

- Onslow County Department of Social Services, Work 1<sup>st</sup> Program: Helps single parents in finding employment and helps with child care and other expenses after obtaining employment; Emergency financial assistance as funds are available for help with utilities
- North Carolina Employment Security Commission: Is a free service to help potential job seekers in gaining employment
- The Salvation Army: Can assist with food needs and emergency financial assistance and operates a store where bargains can be found on items such as clothing
- The Faith Community: Several churches operate food and clothing pantries
- Eastern Carolina Human Services: Block grants can provide emergency financial assistance and help with housing costs
- Coastal Community Action: Provides emergency financial assistance to low income families

### **Housing Information**

- Total Housing Units: **60,071** (American Community Survey, 2013)
- Percent of housing units that are rental: **42.9%** (American Community Survey, 2013)
- Percent of families who rent that pay more than 30% of income, classified as “Overburdened”: **49.5%** (American Community Survey, 2013)
- Housing Units with Children Under 6 yrs. old: **8,590** (American Community Survey, 2013)
- Percent of 2 Parent Households with children under 6 years old and both parents working: **46%** (American Community Survey, 2013)
- Single Female Households with children under age of 18: **5,159** (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010)
- Single Male Households with children under age of 18: **1,387** (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010)
- Section 8 Housing Units: **654** (Coastal Community Action, 2015)
- Waiting period for Section 8 Housing: **2 years** (Coastal Community Action, 2015)
- Federally Assisted Housing Units by Location: **Jacksonville, 1,251; Swansboro, 134; Richlands, 97; Holly Ridge, 45** (Coastal Community Action, 2015)
- Homeless population: **97** (NC Coalition to End Homelessness, 2014)

With almost half of renters in the county being classified as “overburdened” because of paying more than 30% of income towards housing, it is reasonable to conclude that a significant percentage of families served by Early Head Start are in need of more affordable housing.

## Housing resources:

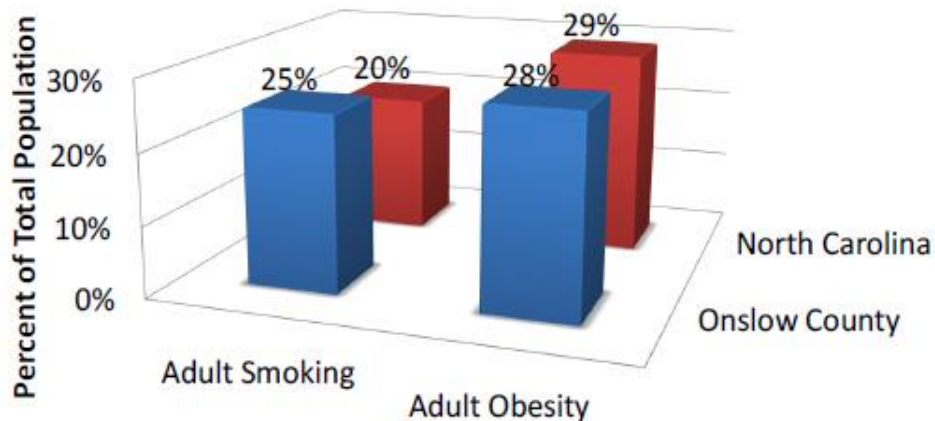
- Eastern Carolina Human Services: Block grants can provide emergency financial assistance and help with housing costs, especially for Section 8 housing
- Section 8 Housing (although there is an approximate 2 year waiting list)
- Coastal Community Action: Provides emergency financial assistance related to housing to low income families
- Military Housing: Housing options are available on base for military families
- City of Jacksonville Home Ownership Assistance Program: Provides low income families with opportunities for home ownership in the city limits

## Health Related Information

- Number of children ages 0-2: **12,755**, (NC LINC, July, 2015 Projection)
- Infant births: **4,328** or **11.9** per day, (NC State Center for Health Statistics, 2013)
- Number of births to mothers age 15-19: **327** (NC State Center for Health Statistics, 2013)
- Percent of low/very low birth rate infants: **8.4%** total; Black (non-Hispanic) rate **15.7%**; Hispanic rate **7.7%**; White (non-Hispanic) rate **5.2%** (NC State Center for Health Statistics, 2013)
- Teen Pregnancy Rate: **67.5 per 1,000** (Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention of NC, 2013)  
The teen pregnancy rate for Onslow County is historically one of the highest in the state.
- Overall Infant Mortality Rate: **6.7%**; Black (non-Hispanic) rate **22.2%**; Hispanic rate **8.1%**; White (non-Hispanic) rate **4.9%** (NC State Center for Health Statistics, 2013)
- Children ages 2-4 who are overweight or obese: **27%** (Eat Smart Move More, NC, 2012)
- Percentage of children ages 0-2 enrolled in early intervention services to reduce effects of developmental delay, emotional disturbance, and/or chronic illness: **4.7%**, (North Carolina Partnership for Children, 2014)

- Percentage of children ages 3-5 enrolled in early intervention services to reduce effects of developmental delay, emotional disturbance, and/or chronic illness: **3.0%**, (North Carolina Partnership for Children, 2014)
- Children 0-3 receiving early intervention services through Children’s Developmental Service Agency: Approximately **250-300** at any given time (CDSA Specific Data, 2013)
- Children 0-3 receiving early intervention services through the Early Developmental Intervention Services program on the military base: An average of **85** active cases monthly and **20** per month being screened (EDIS Program at Naval Hospital, July 2015)
- Percentage of children ages 0-5 in Medicaid who received a well-child exam: **76%** (North Carolina Partnership for Children, 2014)
- Top 2 health issues as identified by 2014 Onslow County Health Department State of the County’s Health report: **Obesity and tobacco use**

## Percentage of Onslow County Residents Who Smoke or Are Obese Compared to North Carolina



	Adult Smoking	Adult Obesity
■ Onslow County	25%	28%
■ North Carolina	20%	29%

<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/north-carolina/2015>

- Number of **teen suicides in 2014: 7** (Onslow County Partnership for Children, Child Advocacy Center)
- Number of primary care physicians: **78** (NC LINC, 2012)

- Number of dentists: **52** (NC LINC, 2012)

For other information regarding the health and nutrition needs of families in Onslow County, the following information from the *2015 Community Health Assessment for Onslow County* prepared by the Onslow County Health Department was used. A survey gathered from a random sample of Onslow County citizens aged 18 or over was conducted for the assessment. Survey respondents were asked to choose the most important issues for their community to address. According to respondents, the 2 most important issues that need to be addressed are obesity and tobacco use. As indicated by the statistics related to health earlier in this report, **childhood obesity is a major concern.**

The top 3 causes of death for county residents are cancer, heart disease and lung disease and are in correlation to that of North Carolina's top three.

The Onslow County Partnership for Children operates Shape NC which provides training and technical assistance to child care providers in Onslow County and surrounding counties to address the problem of childhood obesity. Onslow County Schools Preschool is participating in this initiative.

#### **Health related resources:**

- The Caring Community Health Clinic: Provides basic health care free of cost to adults ages 18-64 who are uninsured. It is primarily staffed by volunteers and can only serve a limited number of people.
- The Onslow County Health Department: Provides extensive health programs for children and families including WIC, immunizations, breastfeeding classes, health and nutrition classes and Child Coordination
- Onslow County Cooperative Extension: Provides various programs for children and families related to health and nutrition
- Onslow County Department of Social Services: Medicaid and food stamps for low income families
- Children's Developmental Services Agency: Is the lead agency for the NC Infant-Toddler program (ages 0-3) which does screenings for developmental delays and other disabilities; provides occupational, physical and speech language therapies
- EDIS Program at Naval Hospital: Screens for developmental delays and other disabilities of children ages 0-3 in military families

- Onslow County Schools: Exceptional Children program conducts Child Find Survey to help parents refer their young children who may have developmental delays or other disabilities
- Onslow County Autism Society: A non-profit organization that provides educational and support for families who have children with autism
- Onslow Memorial Hospital
- Naval Hospital at Camp Lejeune
- Marine Corps Community Services: Counseling and substance abuse prevention/treatment
- Trillium, Inc: Links citizens in need of mental health services to private providers
- Brynn Marr Hospital: A private psychiatric hospital, including a residential treatment program for children/youth
- Head Start funds a Mental Health/Family Community Partnerships Coordinator through its HS program. Stressors on families in our area can be unique so special attention to issues of military families must be addressed.
- A community coalition to implement a county wide suicide prevention program has formed in the last few months
- Private health care providers
- HS has partnerships with dental providers to provide care for families who have no insurance coverage

Head Start staff participates in the monthly meetings of the Local Inter-agency Coordinating Council (LICC). The LICC brings together all of the community agencies and resources that impact early intervention.

### **Child Abuse and Neglect Information**

- Number of reports to Onslow DSS Child Protective Services: **2,724** (Onslow County DSS, 2014)
- Number of children seen for physical/sexual abuse by the Child Advocacy Center from July 2014-June 2015: **240** (Onslow County Partnership for Children, Child Advocacy Center)
- Number of substantiated cases of child abuse/neglect: **239** (Prevent Child Abuse, NC, July 2013-June 2014)



- Average number of children in DSS foster care per month: **193** (Onslow County DSS, 2014)

The Onslow County Department of Social Services is mandated by law to investigate all reports of suspected child abuse/neglect. The potential for child abuse occurring among military families is complicated by the unique stressors they face, such as deployment of one or both parents and isolation of families in terms of being far away from close family.

### **Preventive Family Support Resources:**

- PEERS: A local non-profit agency that provides parental education and support programs for young families, including teen parents/parents to be
- Marine Corps Community Services: A variety of human services including new parent support groups
- Exceptional Family Member Program at Camp Lejeune: Serves military families who have a family member with special needs; Parent support groups, respite child care, child advocacy services/referrals and parent education
- Onslow County Schools Head Start Preschool in collaboration with the Onslow County Schools Exceptional Childrens Program administers several programs related to parent education and support, and also identifies children in regulated child care who may have developmental delays or other disabilities
- Touchpoints: Onslow County Schools Preschool participates with the Partnership for Children who trains child care providers and other professionals who work with young children in the nationally acclaimed Touchpoints model of child development, founded by renowned pediatrician Dr. Barry Brazelton
- Onslow County Schools Pre-School Programs: Head Start, Title 1, NC Pre-K and Exceptional Children programs include parents as a part of their overall education services to young children

The alarming statistics on child abuse and neglect bear out the need for parents of young children to receive helpful and supportive services such as Early Head Start.

### **Preschool and School Information**

- Number of children ages 0-5 enrolled in military, fully accredited child care centers: **1,234** (Family Care Program, Camp Lejeune, June 2015)

- Number of children ages 0-5 in regulated child care: **3,137** (NC Division of Child Development, June 2015)
- Number of child care slots available in regulated child care, including after school care for ages 5-12: **1,778** (NC Division of Child Development, June 2015)
- Head Start Enrollment: **217** (Onslow County Schools, 2014)
- Total Pre-School Program Enrollment of Onslow County Schools: **Approximately 550 annually** (Onslow County Schools, 2014)
- Average daily attendance, Onslow County Schools: **25,564** (Onslow County Schools, 2015)
- Number of school aged children enrolled in Camp Lejeune Schools: Approximately **3,200** (Camp Lejeune Schools, 2014-2015)
- High school graduation rate : **87%** (County Health Rankings and Roadmap, 2014)
- Approximately **19%** of adults have a 4 year college degree or higher (American Community Survey, 2013)

### **Preschool and Education Resources**

- Military base child care centers: All military child care center are nationally accredited to provide high quality child care for military families
- State regulated child care centers and family homes
- NC Pre-K program: Provides high quality preschool education for 4 year old children in both regulated child care centers and Onslow County Schools
- Onslow County Schools: Pre-school programs, including Head Start, Title 1, Exceptional Children, NC Pre-K classrooms and K-12
- Camp Lejeune School District: K-12
- Non-regulated half day pre-school programs, mainly faith based
- Coastal Carolina Community College: Offers GED and basic skills classes for those without a high school education; also offers Assoc. of Arts Degree program and various technical/vocational programs
- Onslow County Literacy Council: Offers literacy classes and resources to help individuals gain or improve reading skills
- Several other programs administered by OCPC impact the quality of pre-school programs and provide services to child care professionals and parents.

With a 0-5 population of **25,353** in Onslow County (NC State Data Center, July 2015 Projection), there are certainly challenges to provide high quality child care. Both the military base and the community in general have stepped up to meet the demands for quality care.

Military child care centers, as well as all Onslow County Schools Preschool Sites are now accredited. In the community, regulated child care has seen significant improvement in the quality of care provided as measured by the North Carolina Partnership for Children Performance Based Incentive System and its star rating measurement. Regulated child care providers are given star ratings from 1-5, with a 5 star being the highest quality of care. All Onslow County School Preschool sites maintain a 4 or 5 star rating.

**Snapshot of Selected Onslow County Industry and Wages:** Average wages by sector vary from a low of \$278 average weekly wages for employees in the accommodations and food services sector (14% of the work force) to a high of \$1051.00 average weekly wages for employees in the public administration sector (10% of the work force).

Industry	Avg. Employment	Avg. Weekly Wages
Accommodations & Food Services	7,554	\$278.00
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	380	\$278.00
Other Services, Ex-Public Administration	1,113	\$430.00
Retail Trade	10,877	\$486.00
Administrative & Waste Services	3,492	\$458.00
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	669	\$547.00
Construction	2288	\$641.00
Education Services	5560	\$706.00
Health Care & Social Assistance	5321	\$810.00
Wholesale Trade	439	\$763.00
Professional & Technical Services	1722	\$793.00
Public Administration	4565	\$1051.00

- \*Derived from Onslow County Industry & Wages 2015 Annual Report (Jacksonville Onslow Economic Development)

## Onslow County Labor Force Statistics

Year	Number in Labor Force	Number Employed	Unemployment Rate
Dec. 2013	67,480	63,121	6.5%
Aug. 2014	67,437	62,446	7.4%
Aug. 2015	65,027	60,971	6.2%

- NC Employment Security Commission Updated October 2015

Onslow County Schools operates a blended preschool program serving approximately 100 preschool students funded by Title 1, with an additional 259 four year old students that are state funded by NC Pre-k since January 2013. Currently there are approximately 224 three and four year olds designated as Exceptional Children in various preschool sites under the Onslow County Schools umbrella.

An additional 55 children age 3-5 are served as “walk in” students (Onslow County Schools Exceptional Children’s Program information 2015). These numbers change constantly as additional children are assessed and qualify for services. (Family Child Care source, Kelly Faircloth, Director, Furnished by OCPC)

### **2015-2016 Onslow County Schools Preschool Wait List:**

- There were 477 waitlisted children after enrollment.
- 292 of the 477 were 4 year olds and 88 of the 292 were Head Start eligible
- 185 of the 477 were 3 year olds and 51 of the 185 were Head Start eligible

The NC Pre-K program administered by Onslow County Partnership for Children has provided families more opportunities for preschool in child care centers throughout the county which is evident in our current waitlist of 725 compared to over 1000 in 2011.

Nearly half the waitlisted families are deemed over income according to federal poverty guidelines; however, Onslow County has experienced rapid growth requiring increased housing development in the areas of Jacksonville and Richlands, thus OCPC and Onslow County Schools Preschool staff have planned extensive recruitment for 2016-17 to ensure eligible preschool families are knowledgeable of preschool resources in Onslow County. Mass application dates and locations are scheduled. Recruitment efforts involve distribution of flyers throughout the county such as local agencies, churches, businesses, schools; advertisement in newspaper and cable television. There is a need for quality programs for children in all areas of the county.

### **Selection Priorities**

The Onslow County Schools Head Start and Family Development Program gives first priority to eligible four-year-old children. There is a considerable waiting list in the Onslow County School system for spots in publicly funded preschool programs for children who will be entering kindergarten the following year. Currently there are almost 400 four year old children on the preschool waiting list for Onslow County Schools. If all eligible four-year-old children are served in a geographic area or if a site has been selected to serve three year old students, next priority will be given to older three-year-old children. At Thompson Early Childhood Center, there are two combination three-year old/four year old classes containing Head Start and EC designated students. In collaboration with Onslow County Partnership for Children- Early Head Start, a Memorandum of Understanding has been established to provide a smooth transition for three year olds who meet eligibility criteria into Onslow County. Selection criteria was revised for the 2016-176 school year to include additional criteria for children and their families under in the area of education status, insured/uninsured and food stamps. Of course, point values are weighed appropriately in categorically eligible components such as foster children, homeless families, according to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, families receiving public assistance and families living below federal poverty guidelines.

## **Transportation Services**

Onslow County Transit System (OUTS) is a coordinated public transit service provider that operates demand-response services to residents in Onslow County and the City of Jacksonville. As part of its network of service, OUTS holds contracts to provide service for several programs:

- Onslow County Senior Services
- Coastal Enterprises (Sheltered workshop)
- Onslow County Department of Social Service Programs
- Medicaid Non-Emergency Medical Transportation
- Elderly and Disabled Transportation Assistance Program
- ADA Complementary Paratransit Service
- Rural General Public Transit Services

Trips are assigned and managed through a single call-center that handles trip reservations

(Transit System Development Plan: Final Report Sept 2014) Updated data

## **Children with Disabilities**

For the current year, Onslow County Schools Exceptional Children's Department is serving 224 three and four year old children who are developmentally delayed, visually impaired, hearing impaired or autistic. There are additional children who are pending designation as developmentally delayed. According to CECAS, the data entry program for the Exceptional Children's program, there are 57 additional children ages 3-5 who are receiving some kind of service through the school system. The Exceptional Children's Program uses the Child Find process to encourage parents to bring in children who have suspected needs. Head Start recruits through the entire county. As of December, 2015, 26% currently enrolled Head Start children have Individual Education Plans (IEP). Currently the children with IEPs in the Head Start program have diagnoses of speech and language impairment, visual impairment, hearing impaired, developmental delays and autism. Both programs, Exception Children and Head Start work with the early intervention program (CDSA) and other agencies to recruit eligible children.

Onslow County has comprehensive services for young children both in diagnosing and providing services for special needs. Head Start staff continues to serve on committees and boards that address the needs of this population.

Communication continues to be excellent between the Onslow County Schools, Onslow County Health Department, Coastal Behavioral Services, Department of Social Services, Onslow County Sickle Cell Association and private physicians and other health care providers.

Our area military bases are designated as Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) Bases which translates to Marine Corps members having family members with this designation are more likely be assigned to our area. These families require different levels of services from the community. Because of the base being designated as (EFMP), there are an abundance of children with disabilities who can be served by Head Start, Title I, NC Pre-K and the Exceptional Children’s Preschool programs. Many of these children live and are served by the exceptional family members program and the Department of Defense (DOD) schools located on the military facilities

**The children in all Onslow County Schools Preschool Programs who have IEPs are as follows: (Child Plus data, December 2015)**

Schools	Visual Impaired	Hearing Impaired	Speech/Lang	Dev/Delayed	Autism	Other
Dixon			1	4	3	0
Hunter’s Creek			1	6		1
Morton			3	7	2	
Queen’s Creek	1	1	7	8	11	1
Richlands Primary						
Southwest			6	5	1	0
Summersill		1	5	15	3	4
Thompson	1	1	3	25	33	2

\*This table does not include the 55 children who are currently being served on a walk in basis Child Care Health Net, the Child Service Coordination Program, the Educational and Developmental Intervention Services (EDIS), Onslow County Autism Society, PARENTS, and SEAL as well as other agencies and groups provide local support for families experiencing the stressors and challenges of having an exceptional family member.

The high numbers of military personnel who have deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan have increased mental health issues, not only the active duty military personnel, but spouses and families as well. Onslow County has multiple resources to address families' mental health issues. OCPC funds a mental health/family community partnership coordinator through its EHS program, while the Onslow County Schools Head Start Program funds a Mental Health Coordinator. OCPC staff attends trainings related to military stressors and have provided training to assist caregivers of young children with managing stress and caring for themselves as caregivers. (Source: OCPC Community Assessment as stated earlier) Onslow County School's Preschool program has a mental health coordinator who provides teaching staff strategies to manage challenging behaviors, which are on a steady rise for the past few years. They also work directly with teaching staff and families to develop behavior plans for the classroom and the home. The mental health coordinator plans numerous parent workshops to educate families on mental health topics. To enhance parent opportunities, she coordinates staff and parent workshops with OCPC as well.

## **Needs for Head Start Eligible Families**

For Head Start eligible families, the needs relate more specifically to a few of the concerns listed above. Review of needs assessments completed by families within the program indicates parent concerns and staff concerns in the following areas:

### **1. Education/Child Care**

- Head Start eligible families in Onslow County continue to need affordable, quality preschool education and childcare resources and services.



- Parents are seeking both high school diplomas, and college/trade education.

## **2. Health, Nutrition and Mental Health**

- In assessing the needs of children, health is an important indicator. In most cases, Onslow County's statistics for child health are better than the state average. The infant mortality rate for Onslow County has lowered in recent years from 6.9 per 1000 births in 2009 to 4.4 per 1000 births in 2010. (Onslow Community Health Assessment 2010)
- The immunization rate for two year olds served at the Onslow County Health Department is 91%. 41% of children have received the same series of immunizations by private providers at age two. This is a decrease of 11% since 2008. (Onslow County Community Health Assessment 2010). There is a need for comprehensive health care for all low-income families in Onslow County.
- Transportation to medical appointments remains a problem since there is limited public transportation in the outlying areas of Onslow County.
- Though family specialists work diligently with families to attain lead screening, receiving documentation of lead screening results from health providers remains a concern of the Head Start program but is showing improvement. (PIR 2014-15 and current data 12/2015)
- According to the 2014 Onslow Community Health Assessment, the overall dental health of children in the county is excellent. 96% of kindergarteners were screened for oral health. Only 1.03% of children entering kindergarten in Onslow County have untreated tooth decay, compared to 1.5% statewide. Accessing dental services for young children remains a concern, but has improved in the last two years.

- In Onslow County 45% of children ages 1-5 enrolled in Medicaid received some sort of dental services during the previous 12 months. Many established dental offices refuse to reschedule appointments for Medicaid patients who do not keep their appointments. Family specialists emphasize this with their families.
- Educating parents about the importance of keeping appointments and notifying health care providers if emergencies occur continues to be a challenge.
- We continue to have a small but growing population of Hispanic families who do not qualify for Medicaid but who need immediate and often extensive dental service.
- More effective strategies to address the increase of challenging behaviors in inclusive classrooms
- Although progress has been made in reducing the number of children substantiated for abuse/neglect since 2003 (from 1,412 in 2003 to 222 in 2010 (Annie Casey Foundation, Kids Count Data Center/ Furnished by OCPC Community Assessment 2012), additional resources need to target the prevention of abuse/neglect.

### **3. Social Service Needs**

- Continuing social service needs include securing quality, low-rent housing, accessing Medicaid services, particularly dental services, accessing transportation services, and addressing concerns identified by the Department of Social Services.
- Having the steady employer of the United States Marine Corps has kept the unemployment rate somewhat in check in our area though acquiring and retaining jobs is an ongoing issue, especially with our single parents.

- Families continue to express concern about developing and maintaining budgets, and stretching their dollars to provide for their families.

## **Community Resources and Accessibility to Families:**

### **1. Childcare and Education**

- Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R): Provides referrals to families regarding available child care options and provides consumer education information to families about child care and child development. CCR&R coordinates training opportunities for child care providers, and operates a Resource Center that makes age appropriate toys, books and materials available to parents and child care providers. CCR&R provides technical assistance to child care providers who work with school-aged children in out of school time settings. The program is administered by OCPC and funded by Smart Start, the NC Division of Child Development, and program income.
- Child Care Subsidy: Assists eligible families with the cost of child care services. Since Onslow County does not have a waiting list for child care subsidy services, funds have been used since 2008 to provide enhanced payments to high quality child care facilities with the goal of addressing the gap between the cost of providing high quality child care and the subsidy rate paid to child care facilities per eligible child. The program is administered by the Onslow County Department of Social Services and funded by Smart Start.
- Child Care Subsidy Administration: Assists the Department of Social Services in meeting the needs of the community by supplying additional staff for processing applications and managing subsidy cases. The program is administered by the Onslow County Department of Social Services and funded by Smart Start.

- Early Head Start: Provides weekly home visits to expecting families and parents of infants and young children. The program coordinates opportunities for families to play and grow together through planned group socializations. It supports the comprehensive well-being of children and families by providing families assistance and information regarding physical health, mental health and other needs common in families of modest socio- economic status. The program is administered by OCPC and funded by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF).
  
- Raising a Reader: Provides materials and training to families to promote early literacy, parent/child interactions and brain development. The program is offered nation-wide and is evidence-based. Encourages a love of reading and sharing books between young children and their caregivers. The program is administered by OCPC and funded by Smart Start.
  
- Coastal Carolina Community College offers an Associates' Degree in Early Childhood Education as well as Child Care Credential programs for providers. This training offers early childhood programs an opportunity to secure highly qualified staff. Being part of Onslow County Schools, the Head Start program hires only "highly qualified staff" as defined by the No Child Left Behind Act.
  
- Coastal Carolina Community College is in the process of providing CDA training to preschool teaching assistants in Onslow County Schools to maintain their CDA credentials, thus meeting the education requirements of the Head Start Act of 2007.
  
- Parent education is coordinated with Coastal Carolina Community College. Head Start staff works with staff at the college to provide information, transportation

and support to parents who are considering returning to school to get a GED, a technical degree or to pursue education in an academic field.

- There are many parents who are seeking to further their education or increase their job skills. In most cases there is financial assistance available for students. According to US Census Bureau estimates, 24.8 percent of Onslow County's householders below poverty level have less than a high school education. Approximately 15% of our currently enrolled Head Start population is in school either part or full time. As a whole the number of high school graduates in Onslow County is high (87.9% of those 25 or older). The most recent indicators of adult literacy for Onslow County show that 49% of the total populations would benefit from literacy instruction. Eighteen percent of the total adult population needs significant assistance with literacy skills (Strategic Plan for Children and Families in Onslow County).
- The Onslow Literacy Council became active again in the fall of 2009. Head Start staff are members of the council and have been trained to provide service and/or recommend services.
- Continuing education classes are available at the community college for a reasonable fee. Program staff receives information to inform interested parents and other family members.

## **2. Health, Nutrition, Mental Health**

- Mental health and other services are available to military service members and spouses through referrals from Military One Source at no cost to service members.
- The civilian population is well served through the Onslow County Health Department.

- WIC-Onslow County has a disproportionately high number of Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program recipients for its population size; as such, The WIC program, also known as the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program, is a federal program administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture which is designed to provide food to low-income pregnant, post-partum and breastfeeding women, infants, and children up to age five. The program includes a combination of nutrition education, supplemental foods, breastfeeding promotion and support, and referrals for health care.
- Private pediatricians provide Medicaid funded services.
- The health department provides lead results for many children. They will take appointments for our students and sometimes offer evening clinics for screenings and immunizations.
- Three in Onslow County that serve young children and accept Medicaid. ?
- Parents may be given information about the Family Support Network of NC as an information resource. They can call and receive information about different family concerns.
- Coordination with the local community college continues to enable us to provide basic services to our Head Start students, but follow up work and finding dental homes continues to be a concern.
- Through the work of staff and members of the Health Advisory Committee, a growing number of private providers are willing to take our Head Start students, and be reimbursed at the Medicaid rate. We are also expanding partnerships to include pediatric dentists located in nearby areas who specialize in working with more complex dental issues.
- Onslow County Schools has employed a registered dietician to develop healthy menus for all students in the school system.

- Onslow County Schools nutrition staff has facilitated presentations at parent committees and orientations to educate families in the preschool program about the importance of a healthy diet.
- Families are provided with information about WIC as well as local food banks, farmers markets and other resources for fresh, nutritious foods.
- A Mental Health Coordinator has been employed to work with students, staff and families in the preschool program. Stressors on families in our area can be unique so special attention to issues of military families must be addressed.
- Our mental health specialist is using staff from behavioral health care agencies in the county to supplement efforts to reach the troubled population often dealt with in the Head Start Program. Collaborations with other mental health providers and teams of professionals in the county provide additional resources for service in the area of mental health.
- **Teen Adolescent Parenting Program:** Serves mothers ages 17 and younger who will be parenting for the first time and are non-Medicaid eligible by encouraging them to continue in their education, prevent subsequent pregnancies and improve their parenting skills. The program is administered by PEERS Family Development Center and funded by Smart Start.
- **Young Moms Connect:** Provides support and services to young pregnant and parenting women (ages 24 and younger) and works to improve community conditions for young families. Onslow County is committed to the increased educational success of young moms, increased numbers of children who are free of abuse and neglect, increased health of moms and children, and increased awareness of the benefits of family planning. Since the program began in April 2011, Young Moms Connect has offered referrals and other assistance to over 100 pregnant or parenting women age 24 or under.

- Parent Education Enhancement Project: Provides family support through parenting classes with the goal of reducing child abuse and neglect. Classes focus on child development, nurturing, discipline, effective parenting, and a number of other topics. Health related parenting instruction is also offered.  
  
The program is administered by Parenting Enhancement, Education, Rapport and Support (PEERS) Family Development Center and funded by Smart Start.
- Parents as Teachers: Provides in-home services to families at-risk of abuse and neglect and other families requesting assistance in their parenting role. Monthly scheduled contacts through home visits, group meetings with other parents, developmental screenings of children, and a network of resources will guide families and offer on-going support. *Parents as Teachers* is a nationwide program. The program is administered by Onslow County Partnership for Children and funded by Smart Start.
- Darkness to Light is a nationally recognized program that trains citizens from all walks of life to recognize the signs of child abuse and neglect. An Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention program serves between 50 and 60 teens annually.
- Parents as Teachers is a nationally recognized program that provides in-home services designed to strengthen the parent/child relationship. OCPC is one of approximately 80 *Touchpoints* training sites in the country. *Touchpoints* is a philosophy developed by world-renowned pediatrician and author T. Berry Brazelton to train healthcare, educational, human services, and child care professionals to better serve families of young children. *Touchpoints* looks at children's development holistically, helping parents to anticipate their child's development and behavior.



Since becoming a training site in 2004, 365 professionals who work with young children and their families have been trained in *Touchpoints*.

- **The Incredible Years:** Provides a nationally acclaimed, evidence-based series of parent training sessions that is specific to parents of children ages three through five who have identified their child's behavior as problematic. The program is administered by PEERS Family Development Center and funded by Smart Start.
  
- Onslow County human services agencies have improved collaboration in recent years to combat the abuse of children. In 2002, Onslow County Partnership for Children (OCPC) facilitated more than 30 agencies (civilian and military) to collaborate to develop the first Community Strategic Plan for Children and Families. The team has come together each year to update the plan, which includes the fight against child abuse and neglect. One of the outgrowths of the Strategic Plan for Children and Families is quarterly training for human services professionals with a particular focus on new employees. At each quarterly training a representative from all community organizations/agencies provide information about their services so that new staff members learn about all available resources for children and families. (OCPC Community Assessment 2012)
  
- Most families struggle with budgets, so the program provides budget workshops through collaboration with the local cooperative extension agency at no cost to parents.
  
- There is also information available about budget friendly food resources (Angel Food Ministries is one example), used clothing and household goods providers (Salvation Army, Good Will, Hem of His Garment) and various church and civic groups that have outreach programs. Head Start staff may provide transportation to these resources.

- Efforts to increase nutrition awareness for families as well as increase information and opportunities for outdoor activities is being addressed through workshops and through information provided by the community. Information about after school activities, sports, Information about available day camps and other activities/events is provided by fliers, email and telephone.
- The Onslow County Schools Head Start Program has a collaborative arrangement with the PEERS program. This program provides parenting classes to families in crisis. Working on other social service needs is provided on a case-by-case basis. (Data from N.C. Child Advocacy Institute)

\*Information on program resources funded by Smart Start was derived from the OCPC Community Assessment 2012

### **Goals for self-improvement**

Our goals for self-improvement from our self-assessment are further justified by the results from our community assessment. These goals also reflect the spirit and intent of our program philosophy, and will become the core of our training and technical assistance plan for the 2013-14 program year.

### **2015-16 Goals for Program Improvement:**

Goals for Improvement	Description
1. Continue focus on quality data collection that results in accurate and measurable child outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple data derived from TS Gold, Instructional Intervention, CLASS and SEFEL indicated a need for additional staff training to improve their skills which would impact their instructional planning and teaching. Pre-service training will be provided based on outside resources availability. PD will be provided by education specialists. They will conduct on-going monitoring, target needs and collaborate with teaching staff individually to improve their data</li> </ul>

	collection skills, thus impacting child outcomes.
2. Continue implementation of SEFEL year 3 moving into year 4 for program-wide implementation and sustainability-long term outcome to improve child outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase additional leadership, implement the SEFEL Pyramid model strategies in the additional targeted classrooms, attend professional development and continue implementation of peer coaching model as indicated in SEFEL implementation plan.</li> <li>• Implement family engagement component-parent training on SEFEL practices</li> </ul>
3. Focus on STEM education, integrating multiple disciplines within and outside the classroom that will enhance teaching practices evidenced by CLASS data and TS Gold data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purchase materials and access resources to implement STEM initiative</li> <li>• Provide professional development in STEM education that promotes inquiry, critical thinking, and problem solving skills.</li> <li>• Sustain adequate number of staff to conduct CLASS observations, provide meaningful feedback individually and during PLCs</li> <li>• Provide CLASS training CLASS training for all new</li> </ul>
<b>Long Term:</b> Strengthen and expand community and business partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self- assessment results indicated a need for more community involvement within the outlying preschool districts to enhance the preschool experience for children and families.</li> <li>• Collaborate with school administrators and faith-based leaders to build community and business partnerships</li> <li>• Expand reading program to include outlying preschool districts</li> </ul>
<b>Long Term:</b> Increase male involvement and overall family engagement in the Head Start program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This goal has been in place and is on-going. Continue efforts to establish the male leadership team and provide multiple opportunities for father/father figures to engage in their child’s education.</li> <li>• Provide parent training on SEFEL practices</li> </ul>

The goals above will be the focus of training and technical assistance efforts for the remainder of the 2015-16 school year and the upcoming 2016-17 school year. Staff will also continue to collaborate and enhance community relationships to increase parent's ability to secure housing, establish meaningful medical and dental homes and to educate families about the importance of making and keeping appointments as well as maintaining family health, dental and other important records. Onslow County is a community with challenges and opportunities that are unique to a military town. The Head Start Program is proud to have become an active participant in the ongoing effort to serve our community. An extensive action plan has been developed to address the identified needs of our program. It is a live document in which we visit throughout the school year to keep us focused on goals and objectives that support quality program improvement.

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