

REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION

**HENDERSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

MEETING DATE: December 3, 2007

SUBJECT: Speak Out For Kids Event Update

ATTACHMENTS: Yes

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

The Executive Director of the Children and Family Resource Center, Maureen Adams, has requested time on the agenda to discuss the Speak Out for Kids Event – a community meeting convened by the United Agenda for Children.

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:

This report is for information only. No action is requested.

Suggested Motion:

No motion suggested.

Preliminary Report
 United Agenda for Children
 Henderson County, NC
 October 20, 2007
 North Henderson High School



Today, more than 280 residents from all over Henderson County gathered at North Henderson High School to create an agenda to ensure that children are educated, healthy, and safe. Over the course of the day-long forum, participants at the United Agenda for Children community meeting discussed their vision for the future for children and then prioritized actions to allow the vision for children to come true.



The community meeting was convened by United Agenda for Children, a group of leaders in Henderson County who work on behalf of children. The Children and Family Resource Center has been helping to organize this initiative with technical assistance from The Lee Institute in Charlotte. In addition to the many residents from across the County, policymakers and elected officials were in attendance to listen to members of the community discuss and share information about the well-being of children.

After the meeting, members of the community will be invited to support the implementation of the priorities created today. They will be asked to become engaged in the lives of children and to be advocates on behalf of children. Policymakers will also use the data gathered to inform the County and school budgeting processes. Implementation teams will be created to begin to design strategies, and leverage existing partnerships and resources to turn the ideas of the community gathering into actions. Implementation teams will be established to advance work towards meeting the identified priorities.

Who Attended the United Agenda for Children Community Gathering?

Age	Oct 20th	County
15-19	14%	5.5%
20-34	14%	17.3%
35-44	18%	12.8%
45-64	41%	25.8%
65+	13%	21.4%

Residence in Henderson County

Less than 1 year	8%
1-5 years	15%
6-10 years	18%
11-20 years	13%
More than 20 years	35%

Race & Ethnicity

African American	12%	3.3%
Asian	0%	0.9%
Caucasian	75%	89.0%
Hispanic/Latino	10%	8.3%
Multi-Ethnic/Other	3%	6.6%

Household Income

Less than \$20,000	9%	20.4%
\$20,000-\$34,999	16%	22.0%
\$35,000-\$49,999	13%	16.5%
\$50,000-\$74,999	29%	19.3%
\$75,000-\$150,000	27%	16.8%
Over \$150,000	6%	5.0%

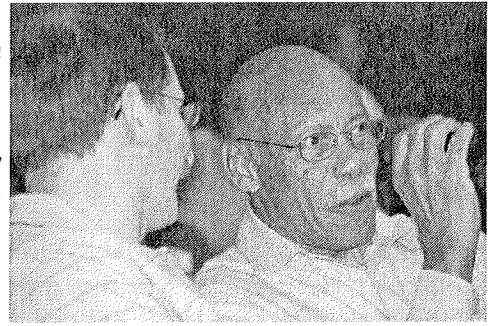
* County-level demographics are from the 2006 American Community Survey

PO Box 1105 • Hendersonville, NC 28793 • 828-698-0674 • www.unitedagendaforchildrenhc.org

Setting the Stage

The primary focus of the day was to determine priorities in the areas of education, health and safety of the children in Henderson County.

Participants began the day at small tables, led by trained facilitators, where they learned from existing data about how children are currently doing in terms of their education, health and safety. Each person was also given a participant guide, which presented the data in further detail.



Individuals at each table collaborated to develop visions of how Henderson County might look in the future if its children are best cared for.

Why does the well-being of children in Henderson County matter?

Participants were asked this question early in the day. Some of their responses included:

- “Because in 40 years they will be this community’s leaders and workers; they are our future!”
- “I feel for them—and *fear* for them.”

Some of these visions, or “headlines,” were:

- Record 100% Literacy Rate
- Teen Pregnancy, Crime Rate, Drug Abuse Plummeting
- Childhood Obesity Eradicated... Small Children Able to Bike and Walk to School
- Todos Los Estudiantes Se Graduen con Honores (Every Student Graduates with Honors)

Equipped with the knowledge of the areas in which Henderson County children are thriving and struggling, and having discussed criteria for making decisions,

participants moved into breakout rooms to do the hard work of the day. They brainstormed ideas on how the community—and the individuals in it—can better the lives of children. Within the small groups, priorities were created, which were combined with those of other groups and became part of a larger prioritizing process when participants returned to the main session.

How Can We Make a Difference for Children?

All of the participants’ ideas were captured during the breakout sessions. Priorities that came out of these breakouts were combined with like ideas and voted upon by the large group. Below are the ideas that will form the United Agenda for Henderson County.

Educated Children

1. Increase access to preschool education through additional funding for child care subsidies and additional preschool spaces.
2. Develop programs that help young people make plans for post-high school.

Healthy Children

1. Provide school nurses at nationally recommended levels.
2. Increase mental health services for children in the community and in schools.

Safe Children

1. Increase safe affordable housing.
2. Establish mentoring programs for at-risk kids.
3. Provide alternatives for youth and teens by creating social venues for them.

Observations RE: Henderson Community Meeting Keypad Results Submitted by the Lee Institute October 31st, 2007

- ✓ Individuals were given six top priorities in education and safety; and five in health—a total of 17 priorities. Individuals selected the top priorities within each area through a method called paired comparisons. In the three interest areas – education, health and safety – each individual priority was compared with every other priority. Participants were asked to select the top priority in each pair. Consequently, participants had the opportunity to select particular priorities repeatedly in individual comparisons.
- ✓ Across the 17 priorities, seven emerged that were clearly selected above all others. A major indicator was the percent of times a priority was picked when displayed for paired comparison. The attached chart shows the seven priorities.
- ✓ When using paired comparisons, one way to assess the weight individuals gave an item is by looking at the percentage of voters who *always* selected that particular item. This data is also showed in the chart.
- ✓ There was one priority in each area that clearly emerged as the strongest preference. These were:
 - **EDUCATION:** Increase access to preschool education through additional funding for childcare subsidies and additional preschool spaces
 - **HEALTH:** Provide school nurses at national recommended levels
 - **SAFETY:** Increase safe, affordable housing
- ✓ Some priorities are worth noting based on the percentage of people that *never* picked them in a paired comparison: “Provide sex education in schools” (41%); “Create a community forum for everyone involved in juvenile justice to get everyone on the same page” (32%); and “Improve the health delivery system by preventing duplication and evaluating current services” (30%).
- ✓ The data has not been statistically analyzed, so it is not possible to make statistically significant statements about the results. However, there are clear patterns and trends worth noting.

- ✓ The seven priorities that emerged as most important to the entire group are widely supported across subgroups: age, gender, race, ethnicity, income and time in the region. There are some differences among demographic groups which could be used when recruiting support (i.e., if one group indicates a strong preference for a priority, champions might be recruited within that demographic).
- ✓ The ability to draw definitive conclusions regarding the perspectives or viewpoints of different groups—by age, gender, amount of time in Henderson County, geography, and race—is limited because of the small sample size (i.e., number of people in a particular group). Age, time in area, and income have large enough numbers in all the areas to support tentative conclusions.
- ✓ When asked about current performance in each area, most of the priorities were rated as “About half way there” or below. However, some participants believed that the community’s performance was better in certain areas. The priorities that 20% or more participants rated higher than “About half way there” in terms of performance were: “Provide sex education in schools” (24%); “Improve school facilities” (23%); “Increase teacher pay” (20%); and “Educate parents, teachers & students on drug prevention” (20%).
- ✓ Based on results from pre- and post- meeting attitudinal evaluations, the participants became more optimistic at the end of the day about the possibility of change occurring as a result of this meeting.

**United Agenda Henderson County
Community Gathering Priorities and Select Keypad Voting Data**

Priority	Percent of Times Priority was Picked when Displayed for Paired Comparison	Percent of People who ALWAYS Chose Priority	Percent of People who NEVER Chose Priority
Provide school nurses at nationally-recommended levels	70.0%	35%	5%
Increase safe, affordable housing	65.7%	34%	8%
Increase access to preschool education through additional funding for child care subsidies and additional preschool spaces	64.1%	23%	4%
Increase mental health services for children in the community and in schools	63.3%	23%	5%
Establish mentoring programs for at-risk kids	55.4%	10%	6%
Provide alternatives for youth and teens - create social venues for them	54.3%	16%	9%
Develop programs that help young people make post-high school graduation plans	53.1%	14%	9%

SPEAK OUT FOR KIDS

Saturday, October 20, 2007

North Henderson High School

PRIORITIES BY CATEGORY:

EDUCATION

Create more after school programs

***Develop programs that help young people make post graduation plans**

Improve School Facilities

Increase Teacher Pay

Provide parent education

***Increase access to preschool education through increased subsidies and additional preschool spaces**

HEALTH

***Provide school nurses**

Provide sex education in schools

***Increase mental health services for children in the community and in schools**

Provide meals for children that are nutritious and include locally grown produce

Improve the health delivery system by preventing duplication and evaluating services

SAFETY

***Mentoring programs for at risk youth**

Drug prevention and education

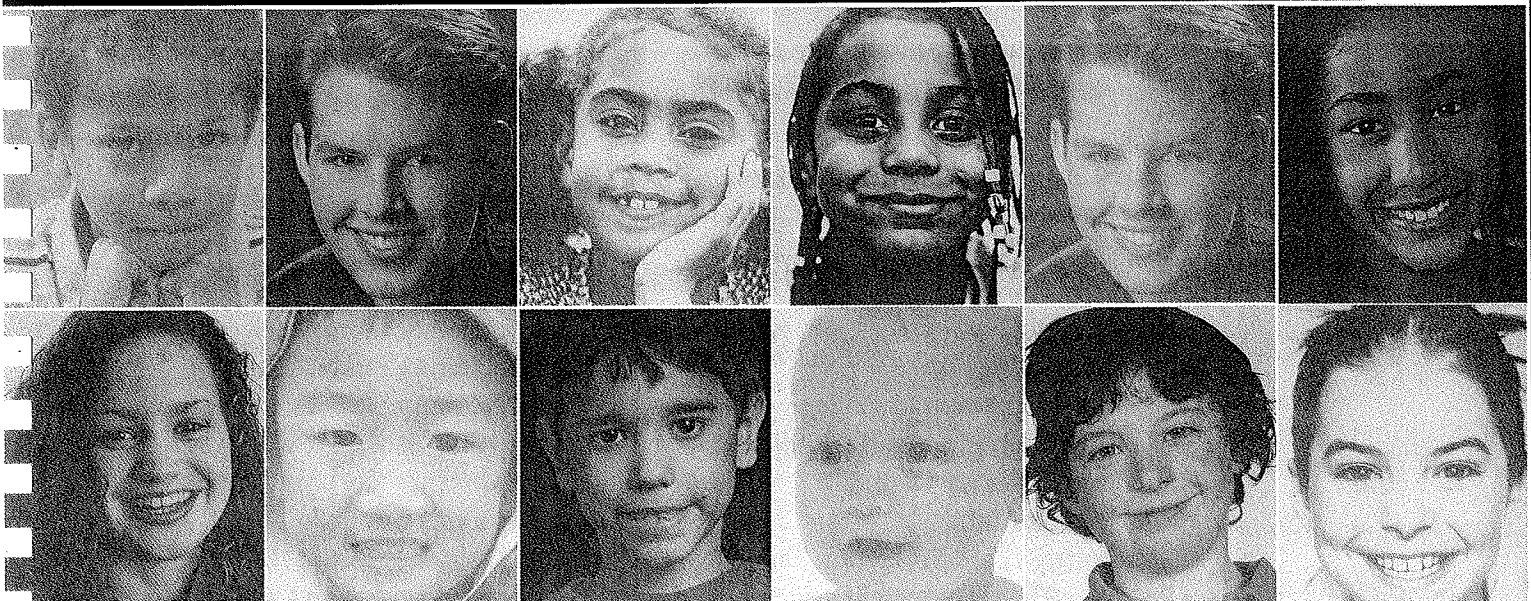
***Social venues for teens**

***Affordable housing**

Create a community forum for everyone involved in juvenile justice to get everyone on the same page

Provide parent education to reduce abuse and delinquency in adolescents

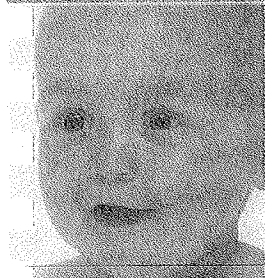
***denotes top priorities in each section**



united agenda for
CHILDREN
SAFE • HEALTHY • EDUCATED

Speak out for kids!

A Community Gathering



Participant Guide

Saturday
October 20, 2007
8:00 am-4:00 pm
North Henderson High School
Hendersonville, NC

United Agenda Community Chairs

Ruth Birge, *Publisher, The Times-News*

Renee Kumor, *retired County Commissioner, Author*

United Agenda Coalition Partners

Representatives from the following organizations have been involved in the process of planning and implementing the United Agenda for Children. From establishing the mission, setting goals, developing core values and gathering and analyzing data, this has been a collaborative working group.

ARP-Phoenix	Henderson County Library
Big Brothers/Big Sisters	Henderson County Public Schools
Blue Ridge Community College	Henderson County Sheriff's Department
Blue Ridge Community Health Services	Hendersonville Rescue Mission
Blue Ridge Literacy Council	Housing Assistance Corporation
Boys & Girls Club	Human Relations Council
Community Child Protection Team	Interfaith Assistance Ministries
Children's Developmental Services	Juvenile Crime Prevention Council
Children and Family Resource Center	Latino Advocacy Council
Child Care Resource & Referral	League of Women Voters
Community Foundation of Henderson County	Mainstay
Consumer Credit Counseling Service	Mountain Laurel
Dispute Settlement Center	Mountain Micro-Bizworks Fund
Employment Security Commission	North Carolina Cooperative Extension
Family Support Network of WNC	Opportunity House
4-H Youth Development	Pardee Hospital
Guardian ad Litem	Park Ridge Hospital-PREP
Girl Scouts of WNC	Partnership for Health
The Healing Place Henderson County	Pisgah Legal Services
Henderson County Board of Commissioners	Project Challenge
Henderson County Chamber of Commerce	Rotary Club – Education Committee
Henderson County Department of Social Services	Smart Start of Henderson County
Henderson County Department of Public Health	Telemon Migrant Head Start
Henderson County Housing Authority	The Times-News
	United Way of Henderson County
	WCCA Head Start
	Western Carolina Community Action
	Women at Risk
	YMCA of Henderson County

The Children and Family Resource Center has been asked to serve as the lead local agency for this coalition. The Children and Family Resource Center is a non-profit organization whose mission is to promote the well-being of children and their families through advocacy, coordination and collaboration among children's services and by providing programs and services to meet their needs. www.childrenandfamily.org.

Technical support has been provided by The Lee Institute, a non-profit organization that promotes collaboration for the public good. www.leeinstitute.org.

The United Agenda for Children of Henderson County and The Lee Institute gratefully acknowledge the groundbreaking work of AmericaSpeaks and its model for large-scale citizen engagement.

welcome

United Agenda for Children Coalition Partners

THANK YOU for being here today. As you participate in the United Agenda for Children community gathering, you will have a chance to speak out on the issues facing the children of Henderson County. We will work to create a set of priorities to make sure every child in our community is safe, healthy and well-educated.

More than 300 of your neighbors are gathered here today. We are parents, grandparents, friends of young people or young people ourselves. We are from the city and the county. We represent a wide variety of cultures and experiences. Some of us are advocates for children, experts in the fields of safety, health and education or elected officials. While we have many differences, we share a common commitment to the children of our community. Together, we can and will help to shape the future for children in Henderson County.

Today you will:

- Learn more about our community's children-who they are, the lives they lead as well as the conditions in which they live, learn, play and grow.
- Hear viewpoints and perspectives from fellow residents who are from different races, ethnicities, parts of town and economic, social and political backgrounds.
- Share values, beliefs and ideas with fellow residents who care about children and the community.
- Create the beginnings of a common, prioritized agenda for addressing critical issues that affect our children's safety, health and education.

You are giving the children of Henderson County a great gift today with your investment of time, energy and ideas. On their behalf, thank you.

Today we will begin this great journey and by the end of today, your participation will:

- Generate buy-in to a shared vision for the future of children and youth in the county.
- Identify most important barriers facing our community in reaching its vision.
- Prioritize goals for addressing barriers within the context of limited resources.
- Begin to assign responsibility within the community for moving elements of the United Agenda for Children forward.
- Mobilize participants and secure commitments to take action on behalf of the community's United Agenda for Children.



United Agenda for Children is an unprecedented coalition of citizens, civic leaders, businesses, government and community agencies who have united to ensure a positive future for all of the children of Henderson County. The goal of United Agenda for Children is to unite our community so that the safety, health, education and overall well-being of our children are ensured.

Why we need your help today



An Investment in Our Future

Why do this? Henderson County is a community in the midst of transition fueled by rapid growth and increasing diversity. It is a community with strong civic pride, a solid economic climate, and a high degree of volunteer and non-profit commitment.

The county is home to more than 20,600 children, from birth to 17. We share a common goal that all children in Henderson County should be safe, healthy and well-educated. How we get there is not as easy as knowing where we want to go. We have no lack of opinions in our community as to what we should be doing. There is also a strong economic investment in numerous programs and approaches. Yet, different perspectives, philosophies and concerns can lead to a lack of public will, absence of collaboration or even inaction. The United Agenda for Children initiative is designed to help our community:

- ➔ **Create an opportunity** for in-depth, honest conversation based on facts to develop our priorities and what we might do together to address them.
- ➔ **Understand that we must all be part of the solution** for children in our community.
- ➔ **Reduce the 'us vs. them' stances** that keep us from making sure all children are healthy, safe and well-educated.
- ➔ **Improve coordination and create a vision shared** by government, non-profits, businesses, the faith community, families and civic leaders to help reduce possible duplication or gaps in services.

The United Agenda for Children will focus the resources, talents and energetic will of the greater Henderson County community on the most important needs of children and youth. Today we take the first step to create that type of united agenda.

A diverse range of leaders in our community, including elected officials, government staff, non-profit staff and board members and business and philanthropic leaders, have agreed to listen carefully to the recommendations that emerge from this day. Many of them are here as participants; some are here as guests. All are here to ensure that the information from this day will inform future policy and practice.

What will you do today?

This is an interactive event designed to bring diverse people, voices and viewpoints together around real, substantive and effective ideas for children in our community.

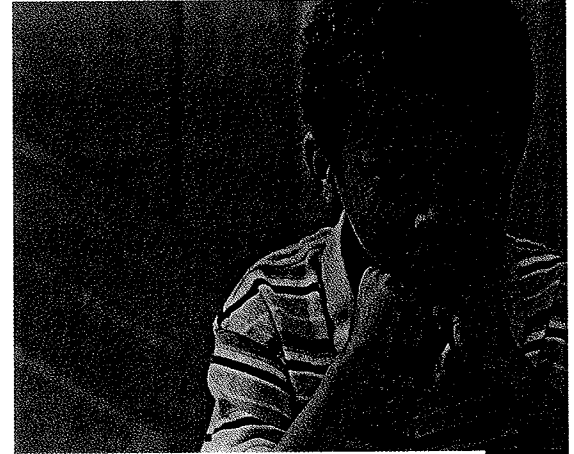
Each person here today represents, and is drawn from, the diversity of the Henderson County community. You will have an easy-to-use voting keypad and the help of a trained volunteer facilitator to guide your discussions. By the end of the day, a preliminary report will be available for everyone that reflects the priorities that we set together.

This guide is organized into four sections: an overview of Henderson County and the three focus areas of health, safety and education. This is your guide to use, so feel free to make notes in it as the discussion progresses. At the end of the day, please take this guide with you to share with family, friends, colleagues and neighbors who could not join us.

What will happen after today's community gathering?

The public part of the United Agenda for Children is launched by today's community gathering. In 2008, the recommendations and priorities you help to develop today will inform the county and school budget processes. Implementation teams will begin to act on them, as well as connect back to ongoing work in our community. These teams will be made up of people representing many different public organizations, governments and parts of our community. At the end of today's meeting, we invite you to consider how you wish to stay involved. In 2008-2009, these implementation teams will continue their work, and the community will be re-engaged to assess the progress of the United Agenda. Throughout this process, the community will receive regular reports on findings and outcomes as the work on behalf of children continues.

At the end of this three-year process, our community will have quantifiably improved the lives of children and youth in Henderson County. We will be better educated about the welfare of our children. And, we will have established a way to work towards a shared vision and action plan to make sure that every child is healthy, safe and well-educated.



Your role in the community gathering

An Overview of Henderson County



Henderson County, NC is 375 square miles and has approximately 99,000 residents. It is home to five incorporated cities and towns - Hendersonville, Fletcher, Flat Rock, Laurel Park and Mills River - and divided into eight townships. A township refers to a small geographic area, ranging in size from 6 to 54 square miles, with 36 square miles being the norm. The largest township is Hendersonville, which accounts for about 50% of the County's residents.¹ Hendersonville, the county seat, is the only township in the county that possesses the typical characteristics of a dense urban center. Henderson County is governed by the five-member Henderson County Board of Commissioners, elected at large.

- 1 public school system--12 elementary schools; 4 middle schools; 4 high schools and Balfour Education Center
- 1 charter school
- 1 public library system with 6 branches
- 2 parks & recreation departments
- 6 private schools
- 2 hospitals
- 1 community college
- Many recreational opportunities both in terms of natural recreation and created facilities

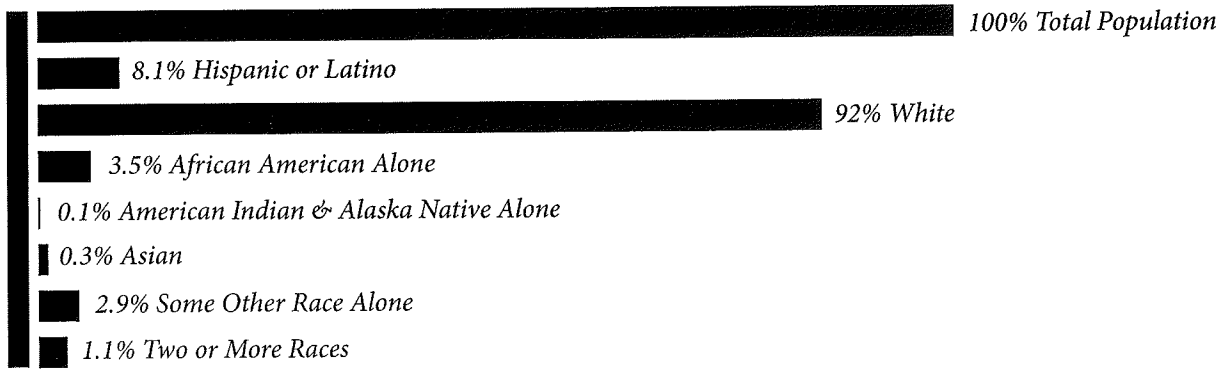
Henderson County's scenic beauty and mild climate has made it an increasingly attractive destination for newcomers in the past decade. It is considered a typical mountain county because it includes mountain ranges, isolated peaks, a rolling plateau and level valley areas. Elevations range from 1,400 feet near Bat Cave at the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains, to 5,000 feet on Little Pisgah.²

Children are a focal point for a number of Henderson County's offerings. It has an active non-profit and cultural sector, many of which provide services or opportunities for children and youth. Henderson County is home to Flat Rock Playhouse (which has been designated as the state theater of North Carolina), the Arts Center and a Symphony Orchestra, all of which actively engage youth.

A look at the community, people and children of Henderson County

- Henderson County is home to approximately 99,000 residents; a population that has grown steadily over the last 16 years, according to the US Census.

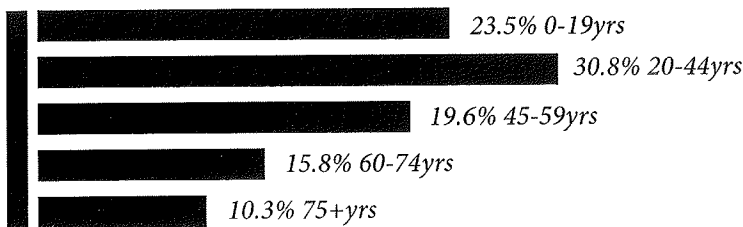
Racial and Ethnic Makeup of Henderson County^{3*}



*percentages add up to more than 100% because "Hispanic or Latino" is an ethnicity counted in addition to a person's race

- The US Census reports that there were approximately 41,000 households in Henderson County in 2005.
- In 2005, approximately 42,000 people were employed in Henderson County. The unemployment rate in 2005 was 4%; less than North Carolina's rate of 5.2%.⁴
- According to the US Census, 78.8% of Henderson County households are homeowners while 21.2% rent.⁵ These statistics do not account for any homeless population.
- The supply of homes in Henderson County for sale for less than \$120,000 has declined from approximately 325 in 2004 to 225 in 2006. Approximately 20 affordable homes are built each year by the Housing Assistance Corporation and Habitat for Humanity.⁶

Population By Age Groups⁷



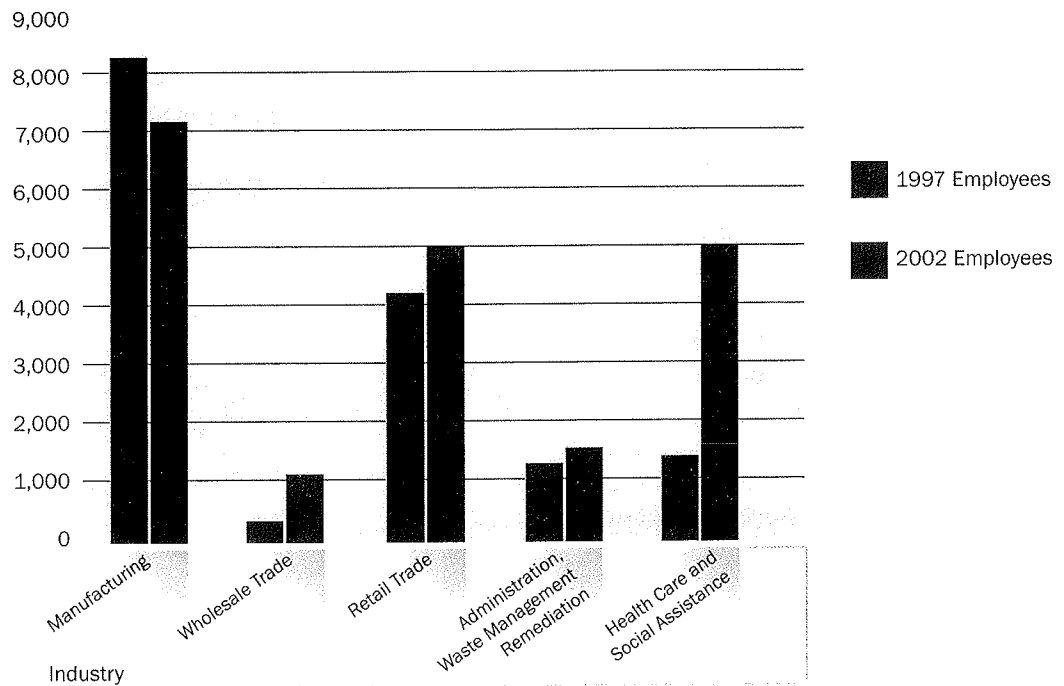
The Economic Picture in Henderson County

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 49.9% of the women in Henderson County are employed outside the home. Median earnings for males were about \$27,000; median earnings for females were about \$22,500. Women own 22% of businesses in Henderson County, a rate below the national average of 27%.⁸

The median family income in Henderson County is just below that of North Carolina, and both figures have increased since 2000. In 2000, the median family income was \$44,974 in Henderson County and \$46,335 in North Carolina. In 2006, median family incomes increased to \$51,271 and \$52,336 in Henderson County and North Carolina, respectively.⁹

Changes have occurred in the types of jobs Henderson County residents are working. Below is a table depicting numbers of employees in the County's six largest industries. Average annual salaries in manufacturing are the highest of the six industries. While this industry continues to employ the most people, it reduced its paid employees between 1997 and 2002.¹⁰

Trends in Number of Henderson County Employees by Industry

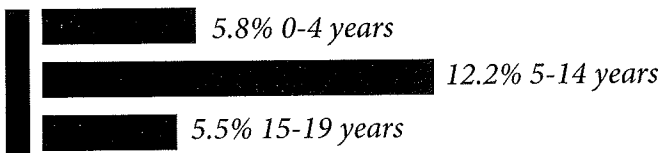


Within the industries that employ Henderson County residents, there are a number of different types of jobs. Of those employed in the County, about 29% work in management or professional occupations; 21% in sales and office jobs; 18% in service jobs; 13% in construction; 18% in production, transportation and material moving occupations.¹¹

Our children and youth: Facts about young people in Henderson County

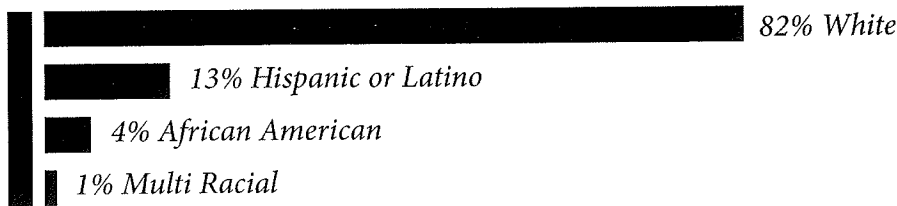
- Approximately 20,430 children live in Henderson County; one out of every five residents is under the age of 18. The population of children 0 -17 years has increased almost 10% over the last five years. The rate of growth for the younger population (ages 0-17) exceeds the growth of those age 18 and older.¹²

Age Distribution of Henderson County Youth

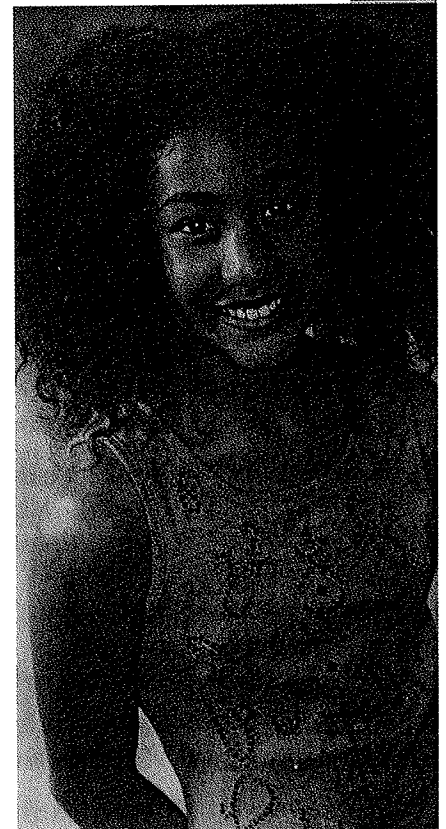


- Approximately 13,000 children attend Henderson County public schools.¹³ For the 2006-2007 school year, there are 955 children enrolled in private school and 654 children being home schooled in Henderson County.¹⁴

Henderson County Children by Race and Ethnicity¹⁵



- About 11,000 of the households in Henderson County have children under 18 years old. Most of these (7,300 households) contain married couples. The remaining households consist of single-parent families; about 2 ½ times as many of these families are lead by single mothers than single fathers.¹⁶
- Approximately 30% (252 out of 819) of African American children in Henderson County are living in a home with two married parents, as compared to 74% (12,140 out of 16,367) of White children in the county.¹⁷
- The cohort graduation rate in Henderson County is 74.5%; above the state average of 68.1%. In 2002, 967 students entered the ninth grade and 720 of them graduated in 2006.¹⁸ The cohort graduation rate illustrates what percentage of 9th graders graduate from high school four years later.
- In 2005, an estimated 22.6% of Henderson County children under the age of 18 were living below the poverty threshold. This is equal to approximately 4,660 children.¹⁹ This child poverty rate is an increase from the year 2000 when an estimated 14.7% of Henderson County children under age 18 were living below the poverty threshold.
- In 2005, 40% of children in grades K-12 were enrolled in free and reduced-price meals programs, compared to 50% in North Carolina.²⁰ Thirteen percent of Henderson County's children receive Food Stamps – an increase of 3% (700 children) in a four year period from 2000 to 2004.²¹

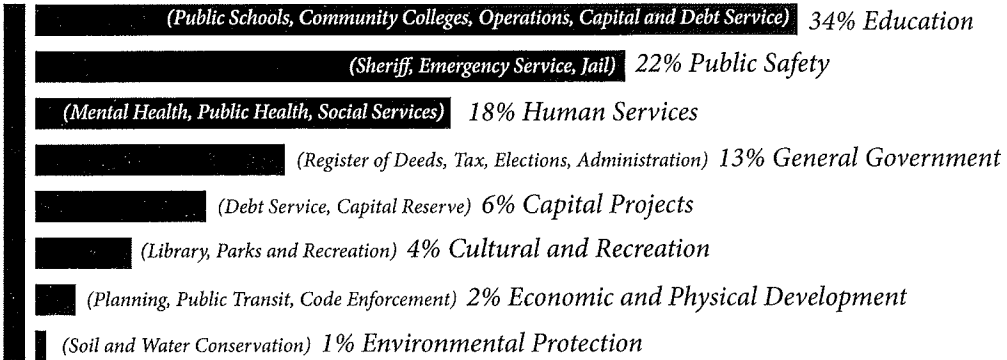


Putting our money where our children are:

Investments for Health, Safety and Education in Our Community

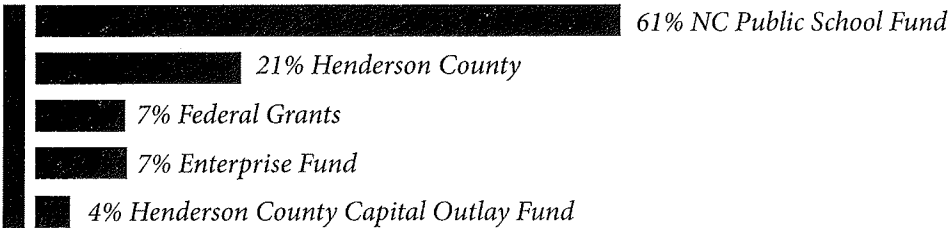
Henderson County's budget is \$94 million. Included in this budget are our investments for spending on education, public safety, human services, general government, capital projects, cultural and recreation, economic and physical developments and environmental protection.

Henderson County Spending, 2008²²



In 2006-2007, the Henderson County School System received \$105.1 million in funding from federal and state governments, local government and non-profit and private sources.²³

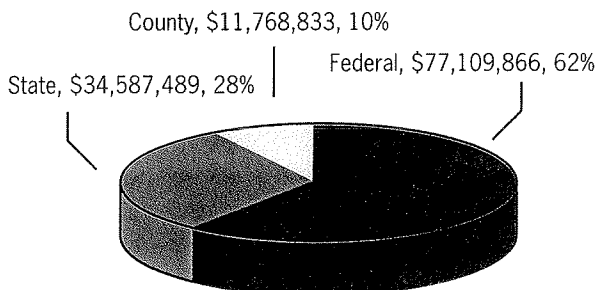
Our Schools²⁴



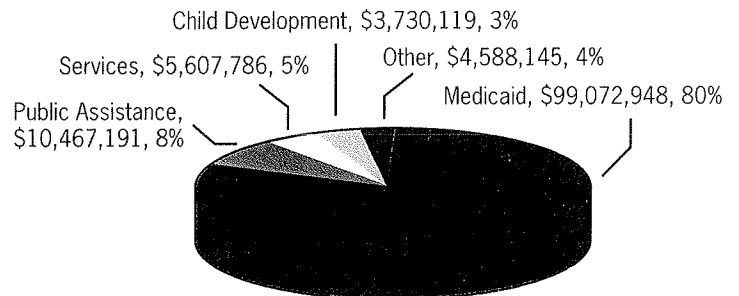
Per-pupil expenditure in Henderson County is \$7,174; the 78th highest expenditure of the school systems in North Carolina. Seventy-seven counties spend more per pupil than Henderson County does.²⁵

Henderson County Department of Social Services (DSS): \$123.5 million

Henderson County DSS Sources of Revenue 2007-2008²⁶



Henderson County DSS Expenditures 2007-2008²⁷



A starting point for discussion

Beginning a community discussion on the lives of children in our community proved to be a complex challenge. To begin the discussion the community members came together to determine that it was necessary to establish criteria to evaluate and direct our thinking. We studied other communities, regionally, state wide and nationally. The group built these values on a deep respect of our unique county and collective lessons learned by our community's past efforts.

The guiding values

- Our focus is children from birth through age seventeen.
- Children of all races, cultures and socio-economic statuses deserve to be healthy, safe and well-educated.
- All children need caring adults in their lives.
- We, the community, are all responsible for the well-being of children.
- A successful coalition respects the diversity of the community and actively involves citizens of all ages, cultures and beliefs.
- We trust our community to identify the challenges our children face, prioritize solutions and find the resources we need.
- Ensuring the well-being of children requires that we mobilize resources from all sectors of our community.
- A successful response to the needs of our children must be proactive.
- A willingness to consider and engage in fundamental institutional and community change is necessary to achieve our mission.
- Most decisions can be altered or amended as situations change and that our community has the ability and responsibility to respond to these changes.

Based on the guiding values, the questions were researched and a detailed view of the condition of children in our community began to emerge. The data amassed defined the conditions as follows:

We sought answers to the following questions:

Are babies born healthy and do children stay healthy and well?

Are children living in safe and stable homes?

Are children living in a safe and supportive community?

Are children ready for school and succeeding in school?

Are youth prepared for adulthood?

Question 1: Are Babies Born Healthy and Do Children Stay Healthy and Well?

Healthy babies have a head start on life. The health of women before, during and after pregnancy has a significant impact on the health of a newborn. As children continue to grow during the early years, children's health is integral to their development and school progress, creating a foundation for them to contribute to our county's social and economic progress.

- Indicator 1: Prenatal Care
- Indicator 2: Teen Pregnancies
- Indicator 3: Infant Death and Illness
- Indicator 4: Insurance Rates for Children
- Indicator 5: Utilization of Health Care
- Indicator 6: School Nurses
- Indicator 7: Immunizations
- Indicator 8: Obesity and Physical Activity
- Indicator 9: Mental Health

Question 2: Are Children Living in Safe and Stable Homes?

From birth to age 17, safety at home and in the community is critical to a child's well-being. We have a shared responsibility for the safety of our children.

A safe and stable home meets the basic needs of children, including safety, food, clothing, adequate shelter and consistent care giving. The safety of our youngest children is affected by their home environment and may be threatened by domestic violence or child abuse.

Question 3: Are Children Living in a Safe and Supportive Community?

As children grow older, the threat of crime and violence outside the home creates a potentially significant issue in school and in the community. In this sense, protecting young people requires not only that they are safe, but that they also feel safe.

- Indicator 1: Juvenile Justice
- Indicator 2: Abused and Neglected Children
- Indicator 3: Families and Children in Poverty
- Indicator 4: Free and Reduced-Price Meals Program
- Indicator 5: Home Ownership
- Indicator 6: Affordable Housing



Question 4: Are Children Ready for School and Succeeding in School?

A child's readiness for school has implications for later school success. Readiness encompasses physical and mental ability, home and community factors and school factors, in addition to social, emotional and intellectual readiness. A child who does well in school in the early years has a better chance at future school successes.²⁸ For Henderson County, long-term vitality is dependent on students graduating from high school with the educational foundation necessary for becoming contributing members of the community.

- Indicator 1: Child Care and Early Educational Experiences
- Indicator 2: Early Intervention Services
- Indicator 3: Student Performance on Standardized Tests

Question 5: Are Youth Prepared for Adulthood?

Whether adolescents will make a successful transition to adulthood hinges on their educational achievement, their acquisition of employable skills and abilities and their physical and mental health. Teen pregnancy and mental health, both of which are discussed in this document, should be considered along with the key indicators below when assessing whether young people are prepared for adulthood.

- Indicator 1: Graduation Rate
- Indicator 2: Post-High School Intentions
- Indicator 3: College Readiness

a word on the **information** in this guide

The following pages offer basic information about the current condition of children and youth in Henderson County in the areas of health, safety and education. In compiling this information, the United Agenda Content Committee attempted to balance the need to provide adequate information for the public to understand the conditions facing young people, while limiting the guide to a manageable size.

All data included in this guide were required to (1) come from a reliable source, (2) be easy to understand, and (3) be based on credible research and (4) be easily found by the average citizen. Local data was used whenever possible. If no local data was available, then state or national data was provided for context.

Are Babies Born Healthy and Do Children Stay Healthy and Well?

Indicator 1: Prenatal Care

Prenatal care is the health care given to women who are pregnant and is defined as entry into care by the fourth month of pregnancy. Early and adequate prenatal care is a way of assuring better birth outcomes.

The objective of early and ongoing prenatal care is to monitor and improve the health of the pregnant mother and her baby. Prenatal care assesses for risky behaviors and encourages protective behaviors, monitors and provides early intervention for medical conditions, tests for health problems with the mother and baby and refers to needed services.

Inadequate prenatal care is often linked to lack of health insurance, the cost of care and other barriers to health care such as the inability to get an appointment earlier in the pregnancy. North Carolina Medicaid has gradually expanded its eligibility requirements in order to better meet the needs of pregnant women and young children.²⁹

What the Data Tells Us

Over the past several years the number of women who received adequate prenatal care in the county and the state has remained steady.

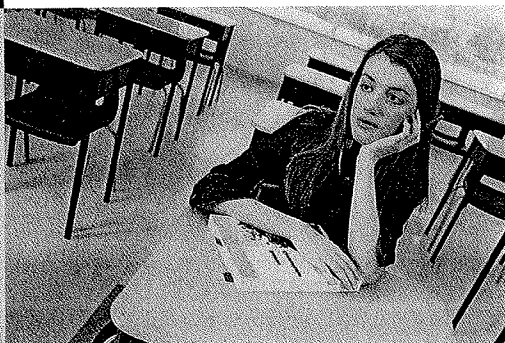
- From the four-year period 2001 through 2005, the percentage of women who received adequate prenatal care changed in Henderson County from 91.8 to 92.1; in North Carolina this rate declined from 84.0 to 83.3. Out of 1,189 births in Henderson County in 2005, 1,056 women received adequate prenatal care.³⁰

Indicator 2: Teen Pregnancies

Compared with older mothers, teen mothers are more likely to be high school dropouts and are more likely to rely on public assistance. Children born to adolescent mothers are more likely to be born prematurely, to be born at a low birth weight and to die as infants. In addition, these children generally have less stimulating home environments and poorer academic and behavioral outcomes than do children born to older mothers and are more likely to have a teen birth themselves.³¹

What the Data Tells Us

- In 2005, there were 1,350 reported pregnancies in Henderson County. Of those, 186 (13.7% or 137 per 1,000 pregnancies) of them were to teenage women. In 2000, the teenage pregnancy rate was 14.2% (142 per 1,000); 2001 was 12.5%; 2002 was 10.6%; 2003 was 10.7%; 2004 was 11.2%.³²



Indicator 3: Infant Death and Illness

The infant mortality rate is the ultimate measure of how many babies are born healthy and is defined as the number of infant deaths per 1,000 live births. Many factors contribute to infant mortality.

The three major causes of infant death and illness are:

- Prematurity and low birth weight. Prematurity refers to babies who are born too early or before 37 weeks of pregnancy. Low birth weight is defined as less than 5 ½ pounds.³³
- Birth defects
- Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)

Risk factors for infant death and illness include births to women:³⁴

- who are less than 15 or over 45 years of age, increasing the likelihood of miscarriages or low birth weight babies;
- who smoke or drink alcohol during pregnancy, increasing the likelihood of babies with low birth weight or fetal alcohol syndrome;
- who have multiple gestations (twins, triplets and other multiples).

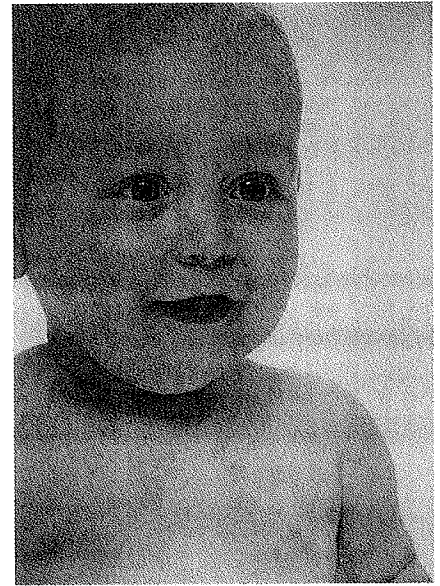
What the Data Tells Us

- In 2005, Henderson County's infant mortality rate was 10 deaths per 1,000 live births or 12 infants who died.³⁵
 - This represents an increase over the rate in 2004 of 5.4 deaths per 1,000 live births or 6 infants who died. The rate in 2003 was seven deaths per 1,000 live births or 8 infants who died.
 - The North Carolina rate of infant mortality was 9 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2005 and 2004.
 - Henderson County ranks 61 out of 100 North Carolina counties (with the number 1 county having the lowest deaths).

In 2005, 130 babies were born prematurely in Henderson County. In 2004, there were 142 premature babies born; 135 in 2003.³⁶

In 2004, 8% of Henderson County births and 9% of North Carolina births were low birth weight.³⁷

- Differences in low birth weight rates vary among racial and ethnic groups. In 2004, 7% of White infants had low birth weight compared with 17% of minority infants.³⁸



Indicator 4: Insurance Rates for Children

Families without insurance are less likely to receive immunizations, prenatal care and preventative health screenings.

In North Carolina, there are two types of free or low-cost health insurance programs for children. Health Check is North Carolina's Medicaid program for children. NC Health Choice is a program designed for children in working poor families who do not qualify for Health Check but cannot afford private health insurance.

What the Data Tells Us

- In 2006, 275,000 or 11.6% of children in North Carolina were uninsured. Using this statewide data for estimation purposes, there would have been about 2,340 uninsured children ages 0-17 in Henderson County in 2006.³⁹
- The number of children enrolled in public health insurance (i.e. Medicaid and NC Health Choice) in Henderson County in July of 2004 was 7,828.⁴⁰ The percentage of children enrolled in public health insurance rose in Henderson County from 30.0% in 2000 to 39.7% in 2004.⁴¹

Indicator 5: Utilization of Health Care

The utilization of health care is measured by the percentage of eligible recipients who use health insurance (including public health insurance) at any given time.

What the Data Tells Us

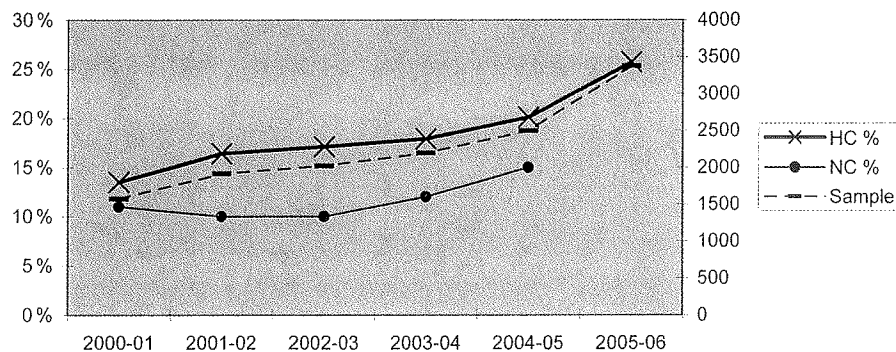
- Public health insurance usage rates in North Carolina have risen in the past five years from 67% for all eligible children ages 0-17 in 2000 to 76% in 2005.⁴²
- In Henderson County, as in all of North Carolina, usage of public health insurance is more likely for children within the first two years of life, with 92% of all eligible children receiving at least one medical appointment in 2005.
- Usage rates of public health insurance fall after age two in Henderson County, with approximately 60% of eligible children receiving yearly appointments until kindergarten, when 70% of eligible children return for health services. This can be compared with 2000, when approximately 65% of the same population received health services until kindergarten.

Indicator 6: School Nurses

School nurses support the health needs of children. The national recommendation for the school nurse-to-student ratio is 1 nurse for every 750 students.

*Henderson County School System reports that the current North Carolina state average ratio for nurses is one nurse for every 1,592 students, but in Henderson County there is one nurse for every 2,120 students.*⁴³

Number and Percentage of Students Diagnosed with Health Conditions, Duplicated Count⁴⁴



In these numbers, children with multiple health issues are counted for each issue. Health conditions include a long list from asthma and ADHD to ulcers.

Indicator 7: Immunizations

Immunizations provide an important marker of childhood health. Public health improvements, through immunizations, have largely eradicated a number of serious childhood illnesses. Immunizations are required for entry into kindergarten in North Carolina. In North Carolina, every child present in this state shall be immunized against diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, poliomyelitis, varicella (chicken pox), hepatitis B, haemophilus influenzae type B (Hib), red measles (rubeola), mumps and rubella. As most of these immunizations are given at early childhood doctor visits, immunization rates provide an indicator of health care access rates for young children.

Childhood immunization success is measured via the rates of receiving all required vaccines by the age of 24 months. The North Carolina Immunization Registry (NCIR) has aided in tracking immunization rates across the state since its inception in 2003. Additionally, tracking immunization success rates at school entry has also been reviewed.

What the Data Tells Us

- Currently, only state level information on immunization rates are available for review.⁴⁵
- North Carolina is one of the top ten states leading the nation in the percentage of 2-year-old children who have received all age-appropriate immunizations.⁴⁶
- White children were more likely to be up-to-date by 24 months of age than African American children, Latino children and Asian children. Discovery of the cause of racial and ethnic disparities requires further study.⁴⁷
- Over 85% of NC children at ages 19-35 months completed appropriate immunizations in 2005, compared to 82% of children in 2000.⁴⁸

Indicator 8: Obesity and Physical Activity

Good nutrition and physical activity are part of healthy growth and development. Poor nutrition and lack of physical activity contribute to the development of diseases such as high blood pressure, diabetes, asthma, heart disease and many other illnesses. Obesity is the fastest growing problem in child health. Largely a preventable illness, obesity and its many complications can best be combated through education of parents and children both at home and at school.⁴⁹

“Obesity” and “overweight” are defined as an excess of body weight relative to height. One measure of this is called the Body Mass Index (BMI). The definition for obesity differs for children and adults. For children, the terms used are obesity and at-risk overweight. For children, obesity is defined as BMI in excess of 95th percentile for age on a pediatric growth chart.⁵⁰ At-risk overweight is defined as a weight between 85th-95th percentiles for age on a pediatric growth chart. For adults, obesity is defined as the condition of being very overweight and having a BMI of 30 or higher. A BMI of 25 to 29.9 is considered overweight.⁵¹

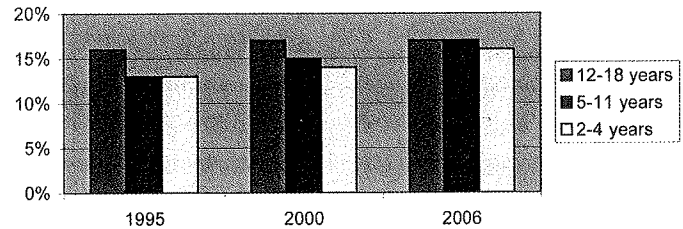
Physical activity can be defined by regular exercise that raises the heart rate significantly. One way to measure physical activity is the participation of school-aged children in the Presidential Fitness Assessment through the public school system.

What the Data Tells Us

- Since 1990, the percentage of obese adults in North Carolina has steadily increased every year. In 1990, 10-14% were in the obese category; in 2000, 20% of adults were categorized as obese; in 2005, 25-29% of the adults in North Carolina were considered obese.⁵²
- Data from two National Health and Nutrition Examination Surveys (1976–1980 and 2003–2004) show that the prevalence of overweight people is increasing: for children aged 2–5 years, prevalence increased from 5% to 14%; for those aged 6–11 years, prevalence increased from 7% to 19%; and for those aged 12–19 years, prevalence increased from 5% to 17%.⁵³
- NC-NPASS is a North Carolina program that collects data on children seen in public health clinics and some school-based health centers. Children in three age groups, 2 to 4 years, 5 to 11 years and 12 to 18 years are studied. Since 1995, the percent of children at risk for becoming overweight has risen in each category.

Prevalence of Overweight Children in Henderson County, 2-18 Years⁵⁴

	1995	2000	2006
12 to 18 years	16%	17%	17%
5 to 11 years	13%	15%	17%
2 to 4 years	13%	14%	16%



- As in many other states, physical education (PE) and fitness classes in North Carolina schools have declined, resulting in some children not having regular gym class. Recently, PE classes have been reinstated on a more regimented basis in schools.⁵⁵
- Ethnically and racially specific data on obesity in North Carolina and Henderson County is not available. However, according to the Center for Disease Control research, there is a higher risk for obesity among certain ethnic and racial groups, including Hispanics and African Americans.

Indicator 9: Mental Health

Nationally, about one in five children with mental health problems receive the services they need.⁵⁶ Children with mental disorders have a higher rate of coming in contact with the juvenile justice system, substance abuse and are at a higher risk of suicide. Poverty status has been associated with both dropping out of services and shorter lengths of mental health treatment.⁵⁷ This relationship between under utilization of mental health services and poverty is especially significant for minority children and families.

Serious mental and emotional disturbances are especially difficult on families with limited access to resources, according to the US General Accounting Office. The Office reports that thousands of children have been placed in state custody in order to access mental health resources.⁵⁸

What the Data Tells Us

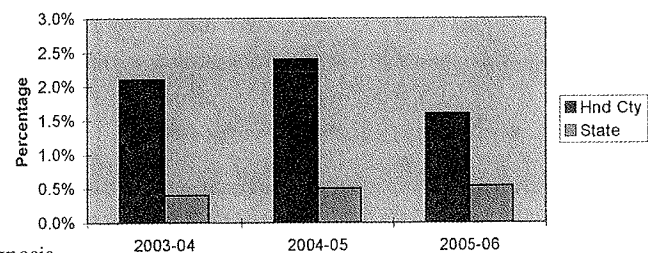
- In Henderson County, 4.3% of children aged 5-15 report having a mental health disability.⁵⁹ However, due to the changing nature of mental disorders in children, along with the existing stigma against the mentally ill, many consider the official numbers to be under reported.

Mental or Addictive Disorders of Children and Adolescents in the US Age 9-17⁶⁰

Disorder	Percent Affected
Anxiety Disorder	13%
Mood Disorders	6%
Disruptive Disorders	10%
Substance Abuse Disorders	2%
Any Disorder	21%

*Number of Henderson County Children with Psychiatric Disorders⁶¹

School Year	Number	Percentage	State Percentage
2003-04	267	2.1%	0.4%
2004-05	302	2.4%	0.5%
2005-06	215	1.6%	0.54%



*In order to be included in this report, a child had a written diagnosis. ADD and ADHD are not included.

Are Children Living in Safe and Stable Homes?

Are Children Living in a Safe and Supportive Community?

Indicator 1: Juvenile Justice

In North Carolina, a youth who is 16 years of age or older and commits a crime will be tried as adult and will not be part of the juvenile justice system. If a youth is 15 or younger and commits a crime then the case will be brought to the attention of the North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

The main goal of the juvenile justice system is rehabilitation rather than punishment. A juvenile offender is considered by the court system very differently than the way that an adult is considered. The adult system looks at the offender specifically, while the juvenile system looks at the juvenile, family, extended family and other areas.

Court involving juveniles (ages 6 to the 16th birthday) is divided into two categories: delinquents and undisciplined.

- Delinquent complaints relate to juveniles who commit offenses that would be illegal for anyone such as assault or larceny.
- Undisciplined complaints relate to offenses or behaviors that are specific to juveniles such as being unable to be managed or controlled by parents or other responsible parties, running away or failure to attend school.

One of the potential outcomes of the juvenile justice process is the commitment by the youth offender to a youth development center. In the state of North Carolina, there are five of these secure residential facilities authorized to provide long-term education, treatment and rehabilitative services to delinquent youth committed by the court to the Development Center.⁶²

What the Data Tells Us

- In 2006 in Henderson County, there were 336 delinquent complaints or a delinquent rate of 29.63 per 1,000. The delinquency rate in North Carolina was 36.21 per 1,000 in the same year.⁶³
- In 2006, there were 81 undisciplined complaints for youth in Henderson County; a rate of 6.03 per 1,000. The rate of undisciplined complaints in North Carolina was 3.64 per 1,000 in the same year.⁶⁴
- There were 40 juvenile detention center admissions of Henderson County residents in 2006. This represents about 4% of the statewide admissions to detention centers.⁶⁵

Indicator 2: Child Abuse and Neglect

Child abuse and neglect can be defined as a non-accidental injury or pattern of injuries to a child. Child abuse includes non-accidental physical abuse (including, but not limited to: beating, harmful restraint, use of a weapon or instrument, or actions that result in or could result in serious physical injury); sexual abuse (i.e., any sexual behavior imposed on a juvenile); emotional abuse (i.e., expressing attitudes or behaviors toward a child that create serious emotional or psychological damage); and neglect (any serious disregard for a juvenile's supervision, care, or discipline).

Child abuse is difficult to measure because abusive behavior often goes unreported and no estimate is available of unreported cases. However, for purposes of this report, child abuse and neglect are measured by the rate of substantiated cases of abuse for children ages 0-17.

Children who are victims of abuse or neglect are more likely to suffer from depression, substance abuse, learning and behavioral difficulties in school and attempted suicide. They are more likely to participate in crimes and misdemeanors, mistreat their own children and become involved in intimate partner violence as adults.⁶⁶

Child abuse and neglect cross all socioeconomic groups, and cut across lines of ethnicity, culture and education. The most common risk factor is parental substance abuse. Other key risk factors are unemployment and poverty, social isolation, family breakup and other stresses.⁶⁷

What the Data Tells Us

- In 2006, 2,074 reports of abuse and neglect were investigated in Henderson County.⁶⁸ This is a 25% increase from FY 2000-01 to FY 2005-06 and about 40% above the state level. The rate of children in Henderson County subject to an investigation for abuse or neglect in 2005 was 93.1 per 1,000, as compared to the state rate of 53.6.⁶⁹
- Additionally, 14% of those cases investigated in Henderson County were found to be substantiated, as compare to the state average rate of 23%. Of those children who were found to be substantiated and in need of services in a child protective services investigation, 52% were aged 0-6.⁷⁰
- Most substantiated investigations by the Department of Social Services were due to neglect.⁷¹
- In 2002, there were 54 children in foster care in Henderson County, a rate of 2.81 per 1,000 children aged 0-17 years. In comparison, the highest foster care rates in North Carolina counties were 16.28, 15.44 and 11.48 per 1,000.⁷²
- There has been a 142% increase in the number of children for whom Henderson County Department of Social Services (DSS) has custody between 2001 and 2006. During 2005, 43% of the children taken into DSS custody were living in homes where methamphetamine sales or use was occurring.⁷³

Indicator 3: Families and Children In Poverty

Indicator 4: Free and Reduced-Price Meals Program

Living in poverty puts children at risk for a wide variety of problems with both immediate and lasting effects. Children who grow up poor are more likely to lack adequate food and clothing, live in poor housing, become victims of crime and violence and lack basic health care. Child poverty can also contribute to social, emotional and behavioral problems.⁷⁴

Poverty is determined at the family level, and an adult or child is considered “in poverty” if they live in a family with income below the official United States poverty thresholds.⁷⁵ The US poverty thresholds take into account family size, the number of children and the age of the head of family. The federal poverty thresholds are the same across the nation and are not adjusted for geographical differences in the cost of living.

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) produces a simplified table of poverty guidelines based on the federal poverty thresholds. For example, the DHHS poverty guideline for a family of four in 2005 was \$19,350.⁷⁶ The North Carolina Justice Center calculated the actual cost of living for a family of four meeting bare minimum expenses in Henderson County to be \$40,044 or 215% of the federal poverty threshold.⁷⁷

Poverty in this document is reported as the number of children living in families below the federal poverty threshold, as well as the percentage of Henderson County school children enrolled in free or reduced-price meals programs and the number of food stamp recipients.

What the Data Tells Us⁷⁸

- The estimated median income for a family in Henderson County in 2006 was \$51,271. Median income divides the income distribution into two equal groups, half having incomes above the median and the other half having incomes below the median. Henderson County ranks 30th out of 100 North Carolina Counties in terms of median family income.⁷⁹
- In 2005, an estimated 22.6% of Henderson County children under the age of 18 were living below the poverty threshold. This is equal to approximately 4,660 children.⁸⁰
- This child poverty rate is an increase from the year 2000 when an estimated 14.7% of Henderson County children under age 18 were living below the poverty threshold.

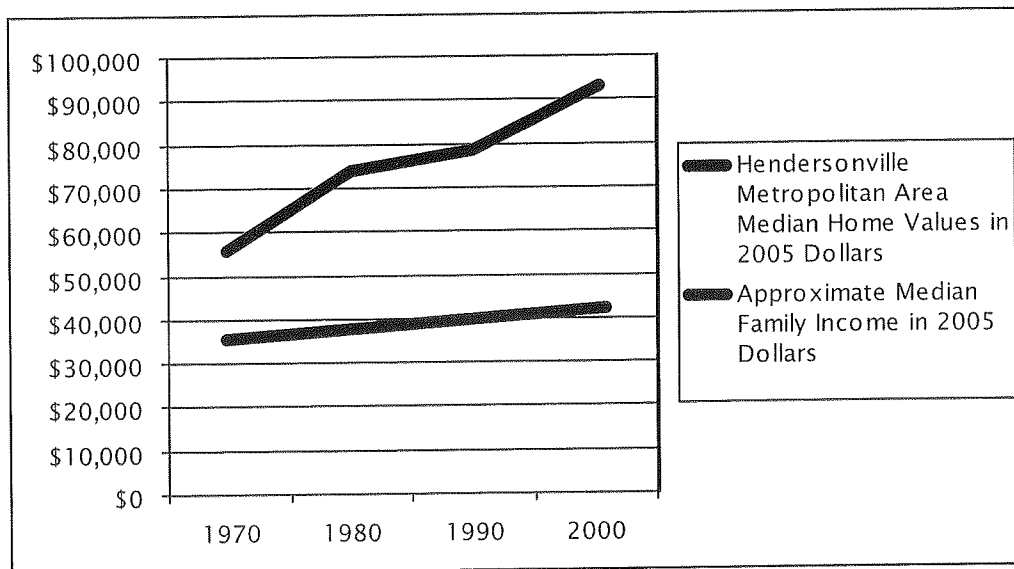
- In Henderson County, approximately 2500 families with children under the age of 18 are living below the poverty threshold.
- The percentage of people in Henderson County below the poverty threshold in 2005 was 12.1%, an increase from 9.7% in 2000.⁸¹
- In 2005, 40% of children in grades K-12 were enrolled in free and reduced-price meals programs, compared to 50% in North Carolina.⁸² Eligibility for free or reduced-price meals program is determined by federal guidelines through a review of a family's financial resources. Children whose families have income of 130% or less of the Federal poverty guideline, as well as those who receive food stamps or cash assistance, are considered eligible for free school lunch. Those whose families have incomes from 131% to 185% of the poverty guideline are eligible for reduced-price meals program.
- Thirteen percent of Henderson County's children receive food stamps – an increase of 3% or over 700 children in a four year period from 2000 to 2004.⁸³

Indicator 5: Housing and Home Ownership

What the Data Tells Us

- According to the US Census, 78.8% of Henderson County households are homeowners while 21.2% rent.⁸⁴ This does not take into account any homeless population.
- It is important to consider the cost of essentials such as housing when studying data on income. Below, a chart outlines the relationship between median family income and home values over time. Home values are one indicator of the cost of living in a community.

Trends in Home Values and Income for Hendersonville Metropolitan Area⁸⁵



- Incomes and minimum wage have not changed much over the past four years in Henderson County but the supply of homes in Henderson County for sale for less than \$120,000 has declined from approximately 325 in 2004 to 225 in 2006. Approximately 20 affordable homes are built each year by the Housing Assistance Corporation and Habitat for Humanity.⁸⁶

Below is a chart listing common jobs, the hourly wage and an affordable mortgage based on hourly wage. Note that the table does not take dual-income households into consideration.⁸⁷

Job Description	Hourly Wage	Mortgage
Food Prep	\$6.72	\$48,400
Cashier	\$7.38	\$53,161
Retail Sales	\$8.58	\$61,805
Preschool Teacher	\$9.10	\$65,500
Administrative Assistant	\$14.60	\$105,172
Firefighter	\$17.13	\$123,396

Indicator 6: Affordable Housing

According to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) “affordable housing” is defined as housing which consumes no more than 30% of a household’s monthly income, including utilities. When families or individuals spend more than 30% of their income on housing they risk not having enough income to weather financial setbacks or meet other basic needs such as food, clothing and medical insurance.

What the Data Tells Us

- Currently in Henderson County, there is a shortage of available affordable housing. Henderson County would need to add 200 single-family homes and 900 rental units to meet the current need.⁸⁸
- All of Henderson County’s affordable rental units have waiting lists. The Section 8 voucher program provides rental subsidies to low-income families. In the past few years, the wait to receive a Housing Choice Voucher (i.e. Section 8 rental assistance), has increased from essentially no wait to more than two years today.⁸⁹



Are Children Ready for School and Succeeding in School?

Indicator 1: Access to High Quality Child Care and Early Educational Experiences

High-quality early formal education refers to the quality of education children receive in years 0-5, before they enter kindergarten. The availability of high quality, affordable childcare makes it possible for parents and other caregivers to work outside the home and helps young children prepare for school. These experiences can also provide

developmentally appropriate enrichment and pre-literacy activities and help children learn the behavioral and social skills essential in kindergarten and later in school. Children who receive high-quality early formal education from infancy through preschool demonstrate improved educational outcomes, a reduced likelihood to engage in criminal activity or rely on social welfare and greater economic independence as adults.⁹⁰

Early education experiences in North Carolina and Henderson County are provided through private childcare centers, Early Head Start, Head Start and More at Four Programming.

Early Head Start serves low-income families with children aged birth through three and low-income pregnant women, while Head Start serves children from 3-5 years old. All Head Start programs are funded as half-day programs. The More at Four program was started in North Carolina to give additional at-risk children a quality pre-school experience and is

administered through the Office of School Readiness.

North Carolina law requires childcare programs with two or more unrelated children, operating for more than four hours per day, to have a license. North Carolina's star rating is an indication of the quality of childcare programs. A range of one to five stars is used to rate each program based on achieving higher levels of program standards, staff education, and compliance history. Programs that meet minimum licensing requirements receive one star, while programs exceeding these basic requirements may voluntarily apply to receive up to five stars.

Childcare subsidies are primarily provided by the state of North Carolina. Childcare subsidies are provided to working families that meet certain income requirements and are designed to enable parents or other primary care givers to maintain employment outside the home. This employment allows the family to work towards better economic stability. Parents must work at least 30 hours a week to qualify for a subsidy in Henderson County.

It is important to note that preschool children who receive care in their own homes by their own family receive formal and informal early educational experiences. Many children who remain at home before kindergarten participate in licensed and unlicensed experiences such as Mothers Morning Out programs or play groups in addition to learning opportunities provided by their own families. North Carolina does not require children to enroll in preschool or any early educational program.⁹¹

What the Data Tells Us

About infant care in Henderson County

- In 2006, 31% (160 calls) of the requests for childcare received by Child Care Resource and Referral were for infant care. Countywide, however, only 7% of the licensed childcare slots (100 slots total) are available for infants.⁹²
- In addition, since July 2005, six family childcare homes have closed and three childcare centers have stopped providing infant care due to the cost of maintaining the classroom, resulting in a loss of 31 infant slots in the county.⁹³
- A survey of childcare providers indicated that the high cost of providing infant care is the most common deterrent to serving infants.⁹⁴

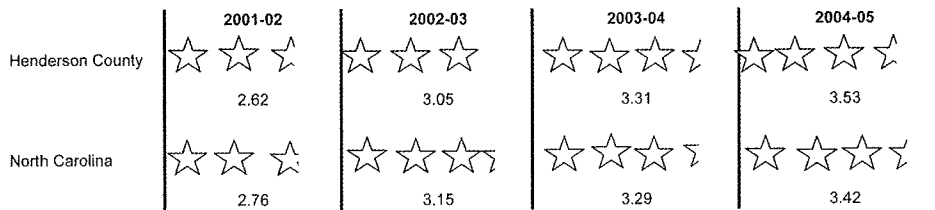


About Child Care Facilities⁹⁵

Children Enrolled in Henderson County Child Care

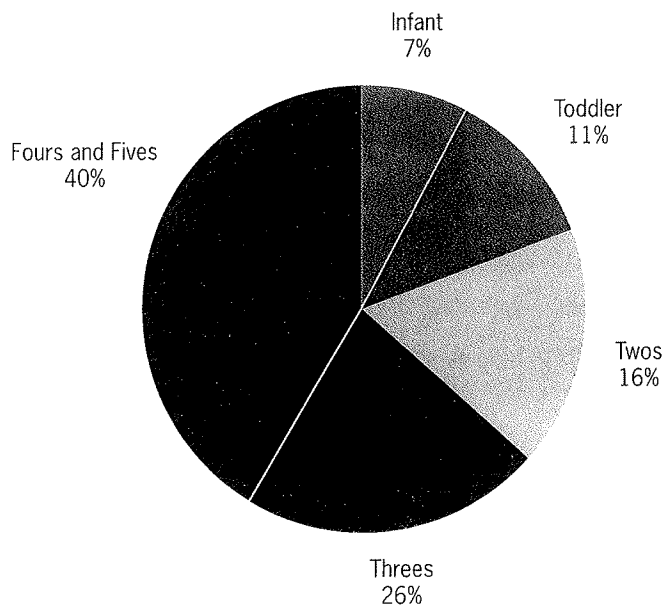
		2001	2005
Number of Children (0-5) Enrolled in Regulated Child Care	Henderson Co.	993	1,329
	NC	161,103	184,500
Percentage of Children (0-5) Enrolled in Regulated Child Care	Henderson Co.	16%	19%
	NC	24%	26%
Number of Children (0-12) Enrolled in Regulated Child Care	Henderson Co.	2,138	2,638
	NC	211,553	260,252
Percentage of Children (0-12) Enrolled in Regulated Child Care	Henderson Co.	16%	18%
	NC	15%	17%

Average Star Rating of Child Placements in Regulated Child Care⁹⁶



- Of the approximately 1,400 licensed child care slots available in Henderson County, the breakdown by age is as follows:

Licensed Child Care Slots by Age in Henderson County⁹⁷



About Child Care Subsidies:

- In 2005, almost half (49%) of children (ages 0-5) in regulated care received a subsidy; the state percentage is 35.5%. As of March 31, 2007, 1,037 Henderson County children were receiving subsidy for childcare.⁹⁸

- As of April 30, 2007, there were 72 working families with a total of 109 children on the waiting list for subsidy in Henderson County.⁹⁹

- Child care consumes 9.4% of a family's budget in a dual income household. It consumes 31.8% of the budget in a single income household.¹⁰⁰

About Kindergarteners

While all public school systems must offer kindergarten, parents do not have to send their children to school until age 7 in North Carolina.¹⁰¹

Early Educational Experience

Kindergartners Entering Henderson County Public Schools

	Fall 2004	Fall 2005	Fall 2006
Total # entering Kindergartners	1009	970	983
% In Licensed Child Care	50%	50%	52%
% In Unlicensed Care	21%	18%	20%
% With No Formal Child Care /Preschool Arrangement	29%	32%	28%

- The percentage of children enrolled in kindergarten in 2004 who had previously attended preschool has remained steady between 2004 and 2006.

Indicator 2: Early Intervention Services

There is consensus that providing early intervention services to infants and toddlers with disabilities allows them to achieve the greatest levels of development and independence possible.¹⁰² Young children with special needs who receive these services are better prepared for school and later life. Children from low-income families who received early educational interventions starting in early infancy were found to have higher scores on reading and math tests than children who did not receive interventions.¹⁰³

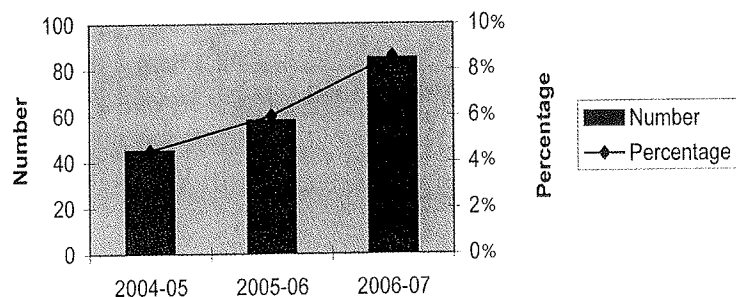
Early intervention applies to children of school age or younger who are discovered to have or be at risk of developing a handicapping condition or other special need that may affect their development. Intervention services may begin as early as birth.

What the Data Tells Us

- The percent of children aged 0-2 identified and receiving early intervention services has increased over the past 5 years to 4%. The percent of children aged 3-5 identified and receiving early intervention services has remained fairly even over the past 5 years – at 3%, which is below North Carolina.
- Data from the Henderson County Public Schools shows an increase in the number of kindergarten children who required Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs) over the past three years. An IEP is a plan developed by the school district team and parents that outlines educational goals and objectives for a child with a disability that adversely affects educational performance.¹⁰⁴

Children in Kindergarten with Individualized Educational Plans¹⁰⁵

	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
# of Kindergartners with IEPs	45	58	85
% of Kindergartners with IEPs	4.5%	6.0%	8.6%



Indicator 3: Student Performance on Standardized Tests

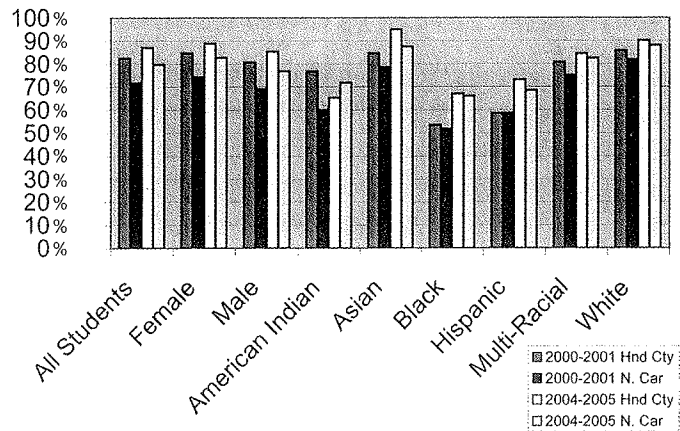
The most common way to determine if children are succeeding in school is based on standardized tests, which are a key component of both North Carolina's and the federal government's accountability plans. These state-mandated year-end assessment tests provide a measure of how well students have mastered the content and skills in the areas tested. Students take reading and math tests at the end-of-grade in 3rd- 8th grade. Once in high school, students can take the SAT and can take the test multiple times. Once in grade 8, students take the Competency Standard and must pass the Competency Standard by the end of grade 12.

What the Data Tells Us

- Henderson County public school students generally score better than the state average in reading and math proficiency. Groups such as migrants and American Indians are under-performing compared to the state, however.¹⁰⁶
- African Americans and migrants, as sub-groups, perform above the state averages on End of Grade and End of Course tests; they do however, lag behind other groups in Henderson County.¹⁰⁷

Percentage of Students At or Above Grade Level in Math and Reading Composite Grades 3-8¹⁰⁸

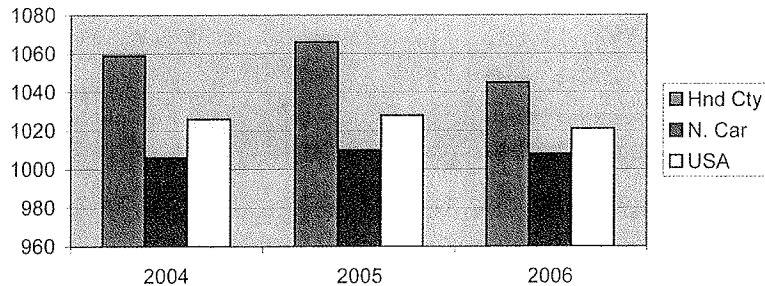
	2000-2001		2004-2005	
	Henderson County	North Carolina	Henderson County	North Carolina
All Students	82.5	71.7	87.1	79.7
Female	84.6	74.3	88.9	82.7
Male	80.7	69.1	85.4	76.9
American Indian	76.9	60.0	65.4	71.9
Asian	84.6	78.7	>=95.0	87.5
Black	53.5	51.9	67.1	66.1
Hispanic	58.6	58.7	73.1	68.5
Multi-Racial	80.8	75.2	84.4	82.5
White	85.8	81.9	90.2	88.1



- SAT scores and participation rates provide data about Henderson County performance against the state and national performance. Between 2004 and 2006, Henderson County students consistently took the test at lower rates than students in the state as a whole. In 2004, 58% (403) of students took the SAT, compared with 70% of students across the state. In 2005, and 2006, the rate of test-takers in Henderson County dropped further to 54% (382) and 52% (388), respectively. During that period, the state's rate remained in the low 70s.¹⁰⁹

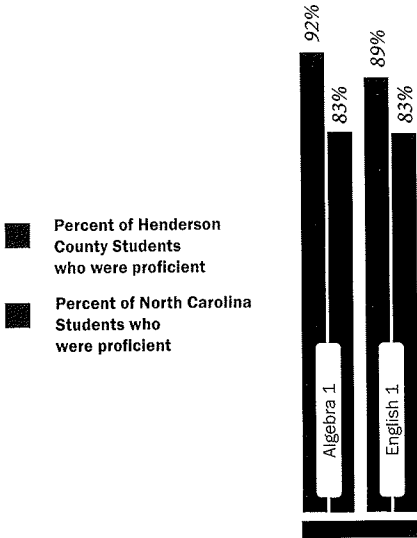
SAT Scores from 2004-2006¹¹⁰

	2004	2005	2006
Henderson County	1059	1066	1045
North Carolina	1006	1010	1008
United States	1026	1028	1021

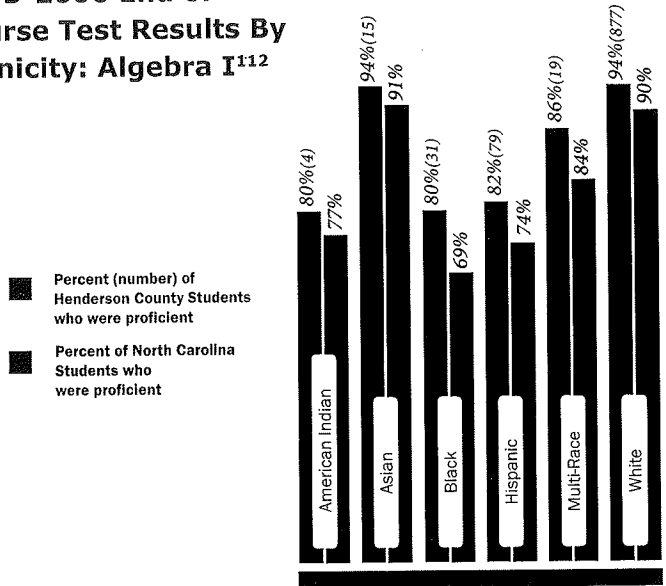


- End-of-course tests are designed to measure student performance on curricular goals and objectives for the tested courses with an emphasis on higher-order thinking skills. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction is the source for all this data.

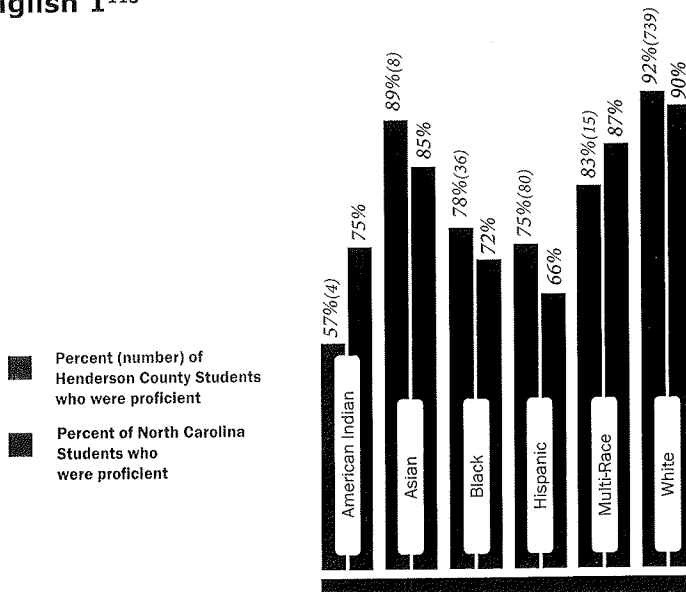
2005-2006 End of Course Test Results¹¹¹



2005-2006 End of Course Test Results By Ethnicity: Algebra I¹¹²



2005-2006 End of Course Test Results by Ethnicity: English 1¹¹³



- To graduate from high school, students must pass a competency test at the end of Grade 12. In 2004-05 Henderson County tested 707 students of which 94.4% were deemed proficient. That percentage is slightly higher than the state's 93.5%¹¹⁴

Are Youth Prepared for Adulthood?

Indicator 1: High School Graduation Rates

The goal of high school is for students to graduate with a diploma and with the preparation they need for success at the college or university and/or in the workplace.

North Carolina counts students who leave school before graduation in two main ways: an annual dropout rate and a cohort graduation rate. We will use the cohort graduation rate for this snapshot. The cohort rate illustrates what percentage of ninth graders has graduated from high school four years later. For example, the 2006 rate illustrates the percentage of the ninth graders who started high school in 2002-03 who graduated from high school in June 2006. Some people have described this as similar to taking a ninth grade year book and blocking out the photos of all those students who are not there by the time graduation ceremonies happen four years later. Those who have not graduated may have moved out of the school district, dropped out, or been expelled from school.

While there is a large cost to society as a whole for each high school dropout who does not complete their degree, the individual cost of being a high school dropout is at least as great. A high school dropout has a far lower earning potential than a high school graduate. Not graduating from high school leads to higher unemployment rates, puts teens at risk for poverty and is strongly related to negative outcomes including substance abuse, risky sexual activity, unplanned pregnancy and involvement in criminal behavior.

In addition to the enormous individual costs, there are also costs to society for each student who decides not to complete their high school degree. Recent research has estimated that on average, it costs society \$209,900 in lost tax revenue, higher health care costs and higher crime-related costs per high school dropout over their lifetime.¹¹⁵

What the Data Tells Us

- The cohort graduation rate in Henderson County is 74.5%; above the state average of 68.1%. In 2002, 967 students entered 9th grade and 720 of them graduated in 2006.¹¹⁶
- In 2006, The Balfour Education Center graduated 42.9 percent of the seniors enrolled on day 20 of the school year. The official total attendance reported to the state officials on day 20 of school was 132. Eighty of these students were seniors. Forty seniors graduated in June and 3 more students may graduate depending on their performance in summer school.¹¹⁷
- In Henderson County, 86% of adults over 25 are high school graduates and 24% have a bachelor's degree or higher.¹¹⁸

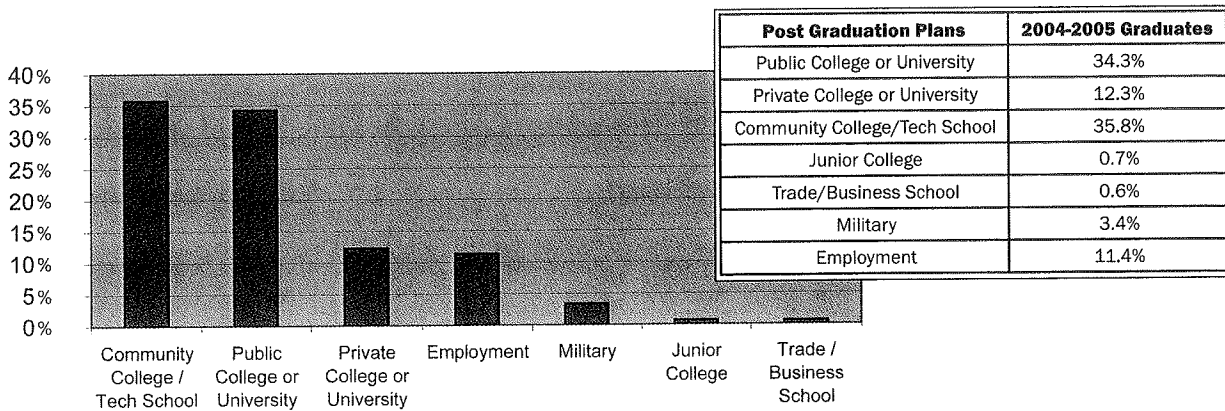
Indicator 2: Post-High School Intentions

Post-high school intentions of Henderson County graduates are a key indicator of our children being prepared for adulthood. Increasingly a college education provides more opportunities for graduates than non-graduates. College graduates are more likely to secure higher paying and benefited positions than are job-seeking competitors without a college degree.

What the Data Tells Us

The majority of the young people graduating from high school in Henderson County express an interest in going to college.

Henderson County High School Graduate Intentions, Percentages¹¹⁹



Indicator 3: College Readiness

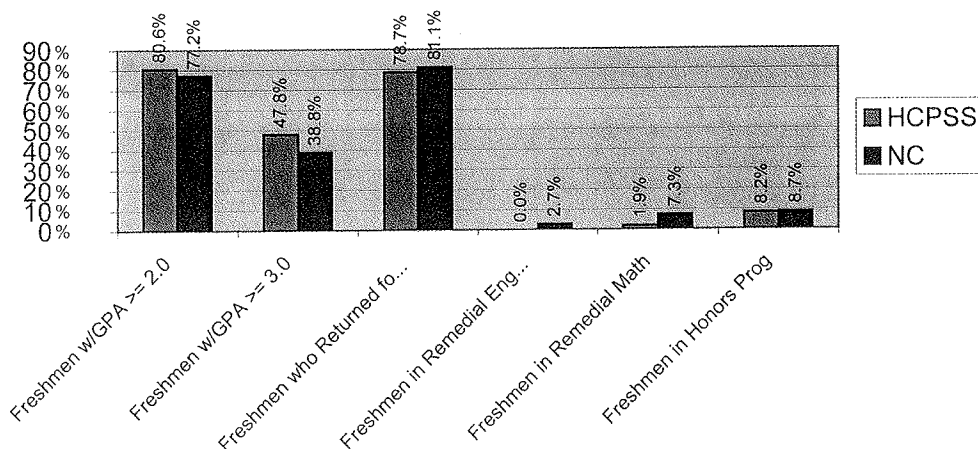
College readiness is a sign that youth are prepared to take advantage of higher education opportunities. College-ready students are those who have demonstrated basic literacy skills and graduated from high school. College readiness is measured by the percentage of high school graduates who have successfully completed courses that fulfill entrance requirements for the University of North Carolina (UNC) system (composed of 16 campuses).

What the Data Tells Us

- The most recent data is from the fall of 2005; it provides a snapshot of how well students in the graduating class of 2004 are doing. In 2004, Henderson County graduated 702 students. Of those 702 graduates 527, or 75%, applied to UNC system schools and more than 74.4% were accepted with a total of 190 enrolling.¹²⁰
- Of the 190 enrolled in the UNC System, Henderson County students are achieving above the state of North Carolina averages in a number of indicators. The chart below compares how well people who come from the Henderson County Public School System (HCPSS) fare in the UNC system compared with other students from North Carolina.

Henderson County School District Graduates - Performance in the UNC System¹²¹

First Six Indicators Refer to Freshmen Who Started in Fall Semester 2006, Following High School Graduation	HCPSS	State of NC
% of Freshmen w/GPA Greater Than or Equal to 2.0	80.6	77.2
% of Freshmen w/GPA Greater Than of Equal to 3.0	47.8	38.8
% of Freshmen Who Returned for Year 2	78.7	81.1
% of Freshmen in Remedial English	0	2.7
% of Freshmen in Remedial Math	1.9	7.3
% of Freshmen Participating in Honors Program	8.2	8.7



Footnotes

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- 23 Henderson County Public Schools Budget Resolution, FY ending June 30, 2007 (<http://www.henderson.k12.nc.us/facts.html>)
- 24 Henderson County Public Schools Budget Resolution: Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2007 (<http://www.henderson.k12.nc.us/facts.html>)
- 25 Department of Public Instruction NC Public Schools Statistical Profile 2006 - pg 69
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- 27 Henderson County Department of Social Services (<http://www.henderson.lib.nc.us/county/dss>)
- 28 National Criminal Justice Reference Service (www.ncjrs.org)
- 29 NC Department of Health and Human Services (<http://www.dhhs.state.nc.us/dma/historyofmedicaid.pdf>)
- 30 NC Department of Health and Human Services, State Center for Health Statistics, US Department of Health and Human Services, Health United States, 2005.
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united agenda for
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HENDERSON COUNTY

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Project Coordinator 698-0674 x 105

Email: maureana@childrenandfamily.org

The United Agenda for Children is a unique coalition of more than 40 non-profit organizations and Hendersonville public institutions, with the support of the business community and others, who have joined forces to address critical issues affecting kids. The United Agenda for Children is spearheaded by the Children and Family Resource Center.



Technical support has been provided by The Lee Institute, a non-profit organization that promotes collaboration for the public good. www.leeinstitute.org

United Agenda Coalition Sponsors

The following organizations are sponsoring the United Agenda for Children with a financial gift.

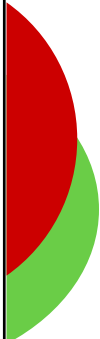
Community Foundation of Henderson County
Community Foundation of Western North Carolina
Henderson County Government
Smart Start of Henderson County
Pardee Hospital
Park Ridge Hospital
Carolina First Bank
ARP Phoenix
United Way of Henderson County
Morrow Insurance Agency, Inc.
Rotary Club of Hendersonville
Village of Flat Rock
Town of Fletcher
Miller's Cleaners
Henderson Oil Company
Town of Mills River
Town of Laurel Park
Henderson County Sheriff's Department
SAM's Club
Wal-Mart

We have received in-kind contributions from the following:

Advanced Business Equipment
Paula De Lorenzo
Harris Teeter
Hendersonville Printing Company
Lowe's
The Mountain Community School
Builder's Club & Mrs. Chet's 5th grade class
Pepsi-Cola
SELEE Corporation
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Staples
Times-News
WHKP 1450-AM
WTZQ 1600-AM
Young Creative Associates, Inc.



WHAT IS... ***SPEAK OUT FOR KIDS?***

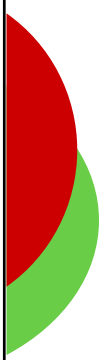




WHAT'S IN A NAME?

United Agenda for Children

United Agenda for Children is a coalition of citizens, civic leaders, businesses, government and community agencies who have united make sure every child in Henderson County is safe, healthy and well educated.

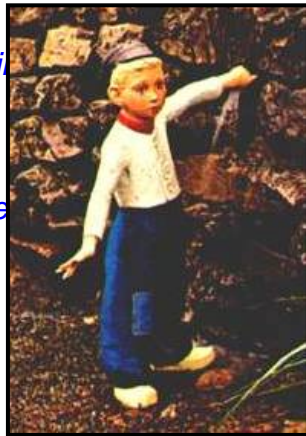


VISION:

Children living in poverty
abuse & neglect

Drugs in the home
insurance

Teen suicide
percent pregnancy



United Agenda for Children Coalition Members

- ARP-Phoenix
- Alliance for Human Services
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters
- Blue Ridge Community College
- Blue Ridge Community Health Services
- Blue Ridge Literacy Council
- Boys & Girls Club
- Community Child Protection Team
- Chamber of Commerce
- Children's Developmental Services
- Children & Family Resource Center
- Child Care Resource & Referral
- Community Foundation of Henderson County
- Consumer Credit Counseling Service
- Dispute Settlement Center
- Employment Security Commission
- Family Support Network of WNC
- 4-H Youth Development
- Guardian ad Litem
- Girl Scouts of WNC
- The Healing Place
- Henderson County Board of Commissioners
- Henderson County Department of Social Services
- Henderson County Department of Public Health
- Henderson County Housing Authority
- Henderson County Library
- Henderson County Public Schools
- Henderson County Sherriff's Department
- Hendersonville Rescue Mission
- Hendersonville Times News
- Housing Assistance Corporation
- Human Relations Council
- Interfaith Assistance Ministries
- Juvenile Crime Prevention Council
- Latino Advocacy Council
- League of Women Voters
- Mainstay
- Mountain Laurel
- Mountain Micro-enterprise Fund
- North Carolina Cooperative Extension
- Opportunity House
- Pardee Hospital
- Park Ridge Hospital
- Partnership for Health
- Pisgah Legal Services
- Project Challenge
- Rotary Club
- Smart Start of Henderson County
- Telamon Migrant Head Start
- United Way of Henderson County
- WCCA Head Start
- Western Carolina Community Action
- Women at Risk
- YMCA of Henderson County



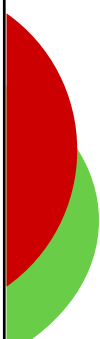
A few powerful ideas

- every human being has the right to be involved in decisions that affect his or her life
- with good process, people can generate more creative and comprehensive solutions collaboratively than they can by themselves.





SPEAK OUT FOR KIDS



GREAT DATA

united agenda for CHILDREN
SAFE • HEALTHY • EDUCATED

Speak out for kids!

A Community Gathering

Participant Guide

Saturday
October 20, 2007
8:30 am - 4:00 pm
North Henderson High School
Henderson, NC

A look at the community, people and children of Henderson County

Our children and youth: Facts about young people in Henderson County

- Approximately 20,000 children live in Henderson County, one out of every five residents is under the age of 18. The population of children 12 years has increased almost 10% over the last five years. The rate of growth for the younger population (ages 0-17) exceeds the growth of those age 18 and older.*

Age Identification of Henderson County Youth

0-5	1,064 (5.3%)
6-11	2,198 (11.0%)
12-17	3,236 (16.4%)
Total	6,498 (32.7%)

Approximately 13,000 children attend Henderson County public schools. For the 2006-2007 school year, there are 852 children identified as grade school and 454 children being home educated in Henderson County.****

united agenda for CHILDREN
SAFE • HEALTHY • EDUCATED





RIGHT PEOPLE IN THE ROOM



AGE

	Speak Out for Kids	Henderson County
○ 0 – 14	0%	17.2%
○ 15 - 19	14%	5.5%
○ 20 - 34	14%	17.3%
○ 35 - 44	18%	12.8%
○ 45 - 64	41%	25.8%
○ 65+	13%	21.4%





RACE/ETHNICITY

Speak Out for Kids Henderson County

○ African American	12%	3.3%
○ Asian/Asian Indian	0%	0.9%
○ Caucasian	75%	89.0%
○ Hispanic or Latino	10%	8.3%
○ Multi-Ethnic/Other	3%	6.6%



GENDER

Speak Out for Kids Henderson County

○ Male	26%	48.7%
○ Female	74%	51.3%



GEOGRAPHY

Speak Out for Kids Henderson County

○ Blue Ridge	11%	9.5%
○ Clear Creek	4%	5.2%
○ Crab Creek	4%	4.6%
○ Edneyville	6%	3.9%
○ Green River	1%	4.4%
○ Hendersonville	57%	49.0%
○ Hooper's Creek/ Fletcher	5%	11.2%
○ Mills River	12%	12.2%



INCOME

Speak Out for Kids Henderson County

○ Less than \$20,000	9%	20.4%
○ \$20,000 - \$34,999	16%	22.0%
○ \$35,000 - \$49,999	13%	16.5%
○ \$50,000 - \$74,999	29%	19.3%
○ \$75,000 - \$150,000	27%	16.8%
○ Over \$150,000	6%	5.0%



RESIDENCY

Speak Out for Kids

- Less than one year 8%
- 1 - 4 years 15%
- 5 - 9 years 18%
- 10 - 14 years 13%
- 15 - 19 years 11%
- 20 years or more 35%



TECHNOLOGY



GOOD PROCESS



GOOD PROCESS





GOOD PROCESS



Priorities in EDUCATION

- Create more after school programs
- **Develop programs that help young people make post graduation plans**
- Improve School Facilities
- Increase Teacher Pay
- Provide parent education
- **Increase access to preschool education through increased subsidies and additional preschool spaces**





Priorities in HEALTH

- **Provide school nurses**
- Provide sex education in schools
- **Increase mental health services for children in the community and in schools**
- Provide meals for children that are nutritious and include locally grown produce
- Improve the health delivery system by preventing duplication and evaluating services



Priorities in SAFETY

- **Mentoring programs for at risk youth**
Drug prevention and education
- **Social venue for teens**
- **Affordable housing**
- Create a community forum for everyone involved in juvenile justice to get everyone on the same page
- Provide parent education to reduce abuse and delinquency in adolescents



At the end of the day



“Our group was involved, caring, interested and pleased about the results.”

“Wonderful participation; cool voting process and technology; super ideas – thoughtful; very organized and well prepared; great job.”

“I have never seen anything so well put together, and for which I have so much hope”



GOING FORWARD

- SUMMARY REPORT DECEMBER
- IN-DEPTH REPORT IN JANUARY
- IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING HAS BEGUN
- REPORT BACK TO THE COMMUNITY IN 2 YEARS





Check on United Agenda

www.unitedagendaforchildrenhc.org



The United Agenda for Children can make real change in the way we think, work and act for kids.

It will take all of us to make it happen; those of us with power over the budgets and policies, those of us with the power of the vote, those of us with the power to focus organizations, and those of us with the power to impact a child in our life.



Credits

United Agenda Community Chairs

- Ruth Birge, *Publisher, The Times-News*
- Renee Kumor, former *County Commissioner, Author*



Credits

Key Leaders

- Dave Adams, Board Chair, Henderson County Department of Social Services
- Senator Tom Apodaca, NC Senate
- Maureen Adams, Executive Director, Children & Family Resource Center*
- Rick Austin, Board Chair, Community Foundation of Henderson County
- Ervin Bazzle, Board Chair, Henderson County Public Schools
- McCray Benson, President/CEO, Community Foundation of Henderson County
- Tom Bridges, Executive Director, Henderson County Department of Public Health
- Jimm Bunch, CEO, Park Ridge Hospital
- Marcia Caserio, Board Chair, Pardee Hospital
- Sheriff Rick Davis, Henderson County Sheriff's Department
- Shea Henson, Executive Director, Smart Start of Henderson County
- Representative Carolyn Justus, NC House of Representatives
- Steve Kirkland, Executive Director, United Way of Henderson County
- Commissioner Chuck McGrady, Henderson County Board of Commissioners
- Joe Johnson, Henderson County Sheriff's Department
- Bill McKibbin, Board Chair, Chamber of Commerce
- Dr. Earl Medlin, Board Chair, Smart Start of Henderson County
- Bill Moore, Mayor, Town of Fletcher
- Bill Moyer, Chair, Henderson County Board of Commissioners
- Dr. Stephen Page, Superintendent, Henderson County Public Schools
- Ray Shaw, Mayor, Village of Flat Rock
- Liston Smith, Executive Director, Henderson County Department of Social Services
- James Sawyer, VP Regional Services, Pardee Hospital
- Representative Trudi Walend, NC House of Representative
- Todd Webb, Board Chair, Children and Family Resource Center
- Bob Williford, Executive Director, Henderson County Chamber of Commerce
- Commissioner Mark Williams, Henderson County Board of Commissioners
- Steve Wyatt, Henderson County Manager
- Commissioner Larry Young, Henderson County Board of Commissioners





Producers

- Community Foundation of Henderson County
- Community Foundation of Western North Carolina
- Henderson County
- Smart Start of Henderson County
- Pardee Hospital
- Park Ridge Hospital
- Carolina First Bank
- ARP Phoenix
- United Way of Henderson County
- Morrow Insurance Agency, Inc.
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