

Western Carolina Community Action / WNCSource
 Disabilities Waiver Request for 2021.2022

Our disability enrollment numbers (February 8, 2022):

	CCP - EHS	HS	EHS	EHS-Ex	Total
Number enrolled that qualify for Services through IDEA	8	14	8	0	30
Actual Enrollment	45	114	93	2	254
Percentage with disabilities	18%	12%	8%	0%	12%

Funded Enrollment	100	245	168	99	612
Percentage with disabilities	8%	6%	5%	0%	5%

Heading into the 2020-2021 program year and the influences of COVID, we put some strategies into place that we felt would help our program be able to serve our families and children including how we would implement screenings with a more virtual focus. Since we had chosen to use the ASQs and our staff already had training, we decided to move to the ASQ-Online platform to have an increased return on the screening tools. We also engaged in conversations with our LEAs to ensure effective collaboration and communication regarding children who we refer.

Due to COVID, we have had many changes in enrollment throughout the pandemic. We have some families who have chosen to keep their children home rather than expose them to the possibility of illness and/or the family does not want their child to wear a mask. Our classrooms are closing frequently when a child exposes their classmates to COVID. Children are also testing positive at a higher rate meaning that they are being excluded at higher rates. This has meant that our staff who normally have a lot of eyes on children, are not being able to identify quickly when there is a need for additional support.

We have referred 29 children for evaluations to date during this program year. 5 of those children were not eligible for services. The rest of these 24 children, we are waiting on the LEA to complete their process. There are other children who we are working with the families on determining if additional screening and evaluations are needed.

In addition we have 3 children where the family did not want to have their child evaluated. For these children, we are individualizing instruction in the classroom and continuing to communicate with the family on the child's progress.

We have Interagency Agreements with all of our Local Education Agencies. We are working on developing better lines of communication when we refer a child to the LEA to ensure that the process moves quicker and the time between the LEA's receipt of the child's information to the start of the referral is no more than 30 days. There are numerous obstacles that occur between our notification and the completed child evaluation. Some of these include, language and literacy, screening processes, and completion of paperwork.

We are still actively recruiting and accepting applications. Previous to the pandemic, we had received numerous referrals from our LEA and CDSA partnerships and this has not been happening nearly as frequently. CDSA has also seen a decline in referrals and families not wanting child care for birth to three due to the pandemic. We are in partnership with our Local Interagency Community Council and their Child Find efforts and were a part of their campaign to bring awareness of Child Find to our local pediatricians offices and included our direct information. We have a newly updated Children's Services Facebook page to reach more of our community. We have participated in local events such as a diaper drive to share information about our program as well.

We continue to evaluate if there are other ways that we can help recruit children with and without disabilities to be a part of our program. This includes looking at our wording on promotional materials to ensure that we are accurately reflecting our ability to serve children with disabilities. We are also working with our CCP sites to ensure that their recruiting efforts include supporting children with disabilities.