

OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL

Connecting Affordable Housing AND Early Childhood Education



Our Challenge

The Leading on Opportunity Task Force Report identified the determinants that are most likely to impact inter-generational poverty and its negative effect on the life trajectory of far too many children and youth in Mecklenburg County. Many see Mecklenburg County as a thriving, opportunity-rich community attracting new residents – nearly 50 a day – but that is only one part of our story.

The three determinants below, plus the cross-cutting factors of segregation and social capital, make up the Opportunity System for children, youth and families.

- 1 Early Childhood Education
- 2 College and Career Readiness
- 3 Family Stability

Two Critical Factors

Leading on Opportunity's partners – including community members, grassroots, faith, government, business and philanthropy – are our greatest resources for change. As we work with these partners to improve opportunity, we recognize that we must address issues systemically. An example is the link between access to housing that is safe and affordable and early education opportunities. Quality early learning opportunities coupled with access to affordable housing can significantly increase opportunity for the next generation.

Lack of Affordable Housing Creates Toxic Stress

The impact of family housing instability and the stress it fosters cannot be overstated. In 2015, 79,252 renter households in Charlotte-Mecklenburg were cost-burdened, paying more than 30% of their income to rent and utilities. Poor housing quality and other housing crises, including evictions and high cost burdens, force impossible choices between food and medicine, let alone savings, and are linked to adverse outcomes for children. As a result, many begin their first year in school behind their more affluent and housing-stable classmates.

In fact, children exposed to unstable housing and under-resourced neighborhoods can experience toxic stress. Research shows the highest rates of housing instability occurs among families with children birth to age five. Toxic stress among children is known to disrupt brain development, which can impact their social, emotional, physical and cognitive development, all areas crucially important for school readiness and success.

Early Childhood Education Produces Results

Improving access to early childhood education is one proven way to combat poor outcomes. Research shows that all children benefit from high-quality early learning programs, such as public pre-k, however, children from low income families benefit most. Nobel-prize winning economist James Heckman estimates that every dollar spent on high-quality early learning programs for low-income children delivers a 13% annual return on investment. Children who enter school ready to succeed are much less likely to repeat a grade or be referred to special education, and much more likely to graduate high school either college or career ready. Access to early childhood education reaps lifelong benefits for all children, regardless of income, creating a meaningful path to economic mobility.

Affordable Housing + Quality Early Childhood Education = Stronger Community

It's important to remember that issues impacting economic opportunity are inextricably linked. Each connects to and reinforces the other. When we address issues systemically, the community is stronger. We have the chance today to ensure that affordable housing and quality early education are accessible for all of our children. If we can do that, we all win.

What Can You Do?

- ✓ Let your Charlotte City Council and Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners know you support their initiatives for Affordable Housing and Early Childhood Education.
- ✓ Share your support on Social Media.  
- ✓ Encourage those in your network to do the same.

Our Vision: Charlotte-Mecklenburg is a community that cares about all our children and youth – regardless of income, race or zip code – where all children belong, have big dreams and find opportunities to achieve their dreams.

www.leadingonopportunity.org

MEDIA TOOLKIT

For Affordable Housing AND Early Childhood Education Support

The goal of the samples below is to explain the connection between affordable housing and early childhood education. After reading the newsletter copy, social posts and the information provided through the link, readers should understand the impact of the lack of affordable housing on a child's educational success.

Sample Newsletter Copy

We need Affordable Housing and quality Early Childhood Education to help boost opportunity for all

Charlotte-Mecklenburg is an opportunity-rich community that continues to attract new residents daily – but that is only one part of our story. The Leading on Opportunity Task Force Report identified three determinants that impact intergenerational poverty: early childhood education; college and career readiness; and family and child stability, plus the cross-cutting factors of segregation and social capital. These issues are inextricably linked. Each connects to and reinforces the other. When we address issues systemically, the community is stronger. We have the chance today to ensure that affordable housing and quality early childhood education are accessible for all of our children. If we can do that, we all win.

Children exposed to unstable housing and under-resourced neighborhoods can experience toxic stress. Research shows the highest rates of housing instability occurs among families with children birth to age five. Toxic stress among children is known to disrupt brain development, which can impact their social, emotional, physical and cognitive development, all areas crucially important for school readiness and success.

Your help is needed. Please read *Opportunity for All: Connecting Affordable Housing AND Early Childhood Education*. You can access the document at: <http://bit.ly/oppforallclt>. Share the information you learn with others and reach out to your Charlotte City Council and Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners and tell them you support affordable housing and early childhood education in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County.

Sample Church Bulletin Copy

Affordable Housing + Quality Early Childhood Education = Strong Community

A strong community is one that provides affordable housing and early childhood education opportunities for all. Please read *Opportunity for All: Connecting Affordable Housing AND Early Childhood Education*. You can access the document at: <http://bit.ly/oppforallclt>. Share the information you learn with others and reach out to your Charlotte City Council and Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners and tell them you support affordable housing and early childhood education in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County.

Partners

City of Charlotte:

Facebook: [/CLTGov](#)

Twitter: [@CLTGov](#)

Mecklenburg County:

Facebook: [/MecklenburgCounty](#)

Twitter: [@MeckCounty](#)

Hashtags

#OpportunityCLT

#AllInForEarlyEd

#AffordableHousingCLT

#AllInForAffordableHousing

#EarlyEdMeckCounty



Sample Facebook & Twitter Posts

Please post on Facebook and Twitter using the schedule outlined above the posts. This will allow us to have a steady stream of content over the next two weeks. Additionally, feel free to use additional content from the one-pager (<http://bit.ly/oppforallclt>) to support any of the posts, especially on Facebook.

Week of April 30

Post the following on the days and times that are best for your social audience:

Economic and social #opportunity includes affordable housing and early childhood education. We have to have both. <http://bit.ly/oppforallclt> #OpportunityCLT

There is a relationship between access to affordable housing and early childhood education opportunities. <http://bit.ly/oppforallclt> #OpportunityCLT

Week of May 7

Post the following on the days and times that are best for your social audience:

Lack of affordable housing creates toxic stress, which is linked to adverse education outcomes for children. Learn more <http://bit.ly/oppforallclt> #OpportunityCLT

Affordable Housing + Quality Early Childhood Education = Strong Community <http://bit.ly/oppforallclt> #OpportunityCLT

Early childhood education is critical to the success of all children and to economic opportunity. #AllInForEarlyEd #EarlyEdMeckCounty

Week of May 14

Post the following on the days and times that are best for your social audience:

Quality early childhood education coupled with access to affordable housing can significantly increase opportunities for the next generation. <http://bit.ly/oppforallclt> #OpportunityCLT

Children who experience unstable housing and live in under-resourced neighborhoods have lower kindergarten readiness scores after accounting for other factors. <http://bit.ly/oppforallclt> #OpportunityCLT #AllInForEarlyEd #AffordableHousingCLT

In 2015, 79,252 renter households in #CLT and #MeckCty paid more than 30 percent of their income for renter utilities. <http://bit.ly/oppforallclt> #OpportunityCLT #AffordableHousingCLT

Other Resources

As rents rise, Charlotte's mayor seeks to more than triple the affordable housing fund: <http://www.charlotteobserver.com/news/local/article208554664.html>

Mapping Mecklenburg Evictions Reveals Neighborhood Trends: <https://carolinapublicpress.org/27725/mapping-mecklenburg-evictions-reveals-neighborhood-trends/>

CMPD Steele Creek's "Reading with Cops" program going on road with mobile library: <http://www.fox46charlotte.com/news/local-news/cmpd-steele-creeks-reading-with-cops-program-going-on-the-road-with-mobile-library>

Why cracking the book early helps crack the opportunity code in life: <http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/News/Pages/Charlotte-Mecklenburg-Schools-Will-Collaborate-with-Harvard-Graduate-School-of-Education-and-MITs-Integrated-Learning-Init.aspx>