Positive Childhoods *Start with Us*

2025–2026 Annual Report

Positive Childhood Alliance NORTH CAROLINA

PositiveChildhoodAllianceNC.org

A Message from Our CEO

Creating positive childhood experiences is at the heart of our work at Positive Childhood Alliance North Carolina (PCANC) — not the absence of harm alone, but the active presence of the relationships, opportunities, and conditions that allow children and families to thrive. FY25-26 was the year we began building that vision to scale.

North Carolina's families need a strong, connected system of support around them that doesn't wait for crisis before stepping in. PCANC's role is to serve as the backbone of that system: convening the right partners, building the right infrastructure, and making sure the people doing the hard work of family support are not doing it alone. Through the NC Family Resource Center Network, our coaching and training, and ongoing policy engagement, that role became more real and visible.

FY25-26 marked the launch of our new strategic plan, built with input from families, partners, and communities statewide. It sets our direction for the next chapter: transforming the narrative around child and family well-being, building a unified family support ecosystem, and strengthening our own infrastructure to sustain the work ahead.

We launched the **Prevent First NC Coalition**, a bold cross-sector effort, convened in partnership with Children's Advocacy Centers of NC, to align North Carolina's child sexual abuse prevention community around shared goals and accountability. Child sexual abuse has too often been overlooked in public systems. Prevent First NC is our answer: a coalition built on the belief that investing in policies, programs, and practices that make sexual abuse less likely is the right and smart thing to do.

We also welcomed the nationally recognized **Parents as Teachers** home visiting model under our umbrella, deepening our connection to families and strengthening support for the early relational experiences that shape a child's entire life — exactly the kind of community-rooted work our strategic plan calls us toward.

Nothing captures the momentum of this year better than the **Positive Childhood Alliance**. Launched in August 2025, this statewide network grew to more than 1,300 members by June 30. Through regional convenings across North Carolina, members came together to connect, learn, and build relationships that make a real ecosystem of support possible.

None of this happened by accident. The pages that follow tell the story. I hope you'll read them with a clear sense of what's possible when we focus on what we want to build for NC's children and families.

With gratitude,

Sharon Hirsch
President & CEO

By the Numbers
2025-2026

215,000+
people reached through PCANC's public awareness channels

82 agencies
across
62 counties
are part of the NC Family Resource Center Network, with PCANC serving as the statewide backbone.

28
Hurricane Helene-affected counties have agencies that received subgrants to address family financial needs and help them access childcare, mental health, and other community-based services.

96%
of participants rated coaching and consultation support as high quality and valuable

35,000+
individuals trained through online courses, webinars, and trainings

98%
of webinar and training participants reported improved understanding of upstream prevention strategies

Who We Are + Why It Matters

Positive Childhoods Start With What We Build Together

Every child deserves to grow up safe, healthy, supported, and connected. Positive childhoods are shaped not only by what happens within a family, but by the relationships, resources, communities, and systems that surround them. When families have access to trusted support, stable resources, strong relationships, and communities that are there when they need them, children have more opportunities for positive experiences that can shape their well-being for a lifetime. This reflects Positive Childhood Alliance North Carolina's broader focus on *strengthening the conditions* surrounding children and families.

Positive Childhood Alliance North Carolina (PCANC) works to ensure every child has the opportunity for a positive childhood and every family has the support they need from the start. Our work is grounded in Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs) and the Science of the Positive, which asks us to focus not only on the challenges we want to reduce, but on the positive experiences and conditions we want to grow.

That means looking beyond any single program or service. PCANC strengthens the people and organizations closest to families, connects partners across communities and systems, elevates family voice, builds public understanding, and advances policies that strengthen family well-being. This broad approach reflects PCANC's work across education, advocacy, coalition building, family engagement, public awareness, and strategic partnerships.

PCANC has a unique statewide role: **we connect the people, ideas, resources, and systems that make positive childhoods possible.** We bring together families, professionals, community members, policymakers, and partners across sectors, while helping local organizations build the knowledge, skills, and capacity to turn what we know into action.

By serving as a backbone, connector, and capacity builder, PCANC helps strengthen an entire ecosystem of support around North Carolina's children and families.

Our Mission

Positive Childhood Alliance NC (the state chapter of Prevent Child Abuse America) advances policies, programs and practices that support well-being for all NC children and families.

Our Approach

When we address root causes and invest in proven strategies that help strengthen families, we promote positive childhood experiences for all NC children. We've created an alliance of advocates across the state to implement upstream solutions to strengthen families and communities.

Access our website for more information.

Stronger Support Systems Build Stronger Families

When a family is struggling, the person sitting across from them matters.

Do they see a parent who needs to be "fixed" or told what to do? Or do they see someone with strengths, ideas, and the ability to help shape what comes next?

At Positive Childhood Alliance North Carolina, much of our work begins before a family is served. We strengthen the people and organizations that support families every day, helping professionals build the skills to listen differently, recognize strengths and work alongside parents rather than simply provide answers.

Abbi Mullens sees that ripple effect firsthand. As Program Manager of Direct Services to Families at Down East Partnership in Rocky Mount, she supervises professionals who work directly with families in her community. For five years, Abbi has worked closely with PCANC's Monica Hicks through coaching, training, and ongoing support.

"I could not do my job without Monica's support," Abbi says. "She has helped me grow in this role so that I can better support the people I supervise who serve the families in our community."

For Abbi, what distinguishes PCANC is the depth of that relationship. "The ability of PCANC to offer such well-rounded coaching and training is what sets them apart from other organizations in this field."

And that investment in professionals ultimately changes what is possible for families.

One mother came to Circle of Parents, a program supported by PCANC's coaching and technical assistance, after losing her husband and navigating concerns about her young daughter. She found support and connection at a time when she needed both. But her story didn't end when the immediate crisis passed.

Over time, she built confidence and discovered that her own experiences could help others. Two years later, she is a Parent Leader, serves on two committees and helps families in similar circumstances.

Her journey captures what we want family support to look like. The goal isn't simply to help someone through a difficult moment, but rather to create the conditions where parents feel heard, respected, and empowered.

This is the ripple effect of PCANC's work. We strengthen a leader like Abbi who then strengthens the professionals she supervises. They create more supportive experiences for parents. And a mother who once needed a circle of support can become part of that circle for another family.

That is how stronger support systems build stronger families and how stronger families build stronger communities.

Informing the Child Welfare System with Lived Expertise

Since 2018, the NC Child Welfare Family Advisory Council (CWFAC) has engaged in conversations to shift policies, inform decisions, and co-design solutions that prioritize family well-being. In July 2025, the CWFAC transitioned their hub to Positive Childhood Alliance North Carolina (PCANC) in partnership with the Division of Social Services (DSS), creating a triangle of support to work collaboratively. Council members each hold unique perspectives of lived expertise — not just experience — in navigating the child welfare system, informing positive change in the system for families and children.

The CWFAC has seen immense growth with PCANC, not only becoming a full 12-member council, but also through infrastructure to sustain the council. In FY25-26 the council worked together to build an orientation process and peer mentorship program to support new members. Additionally, the creation of materials like public awareness collateral, business cards, a webpage, and a one-pager about their work helped the council build their identity and confidence as a true system partner and leader.

With the new materials and confidence that the council members fostered, they were able to strengthen their presence and visibility in the child welfare system, working to make significant change. The CWFAC has been exploring opportunities for change in the way the system works with families, talks about families, and helps them understand and navigate complex systems. The voices of the council members have informed positive change, such as adjusting the language used to refer to children in the system and assisting in the designs of programs to assist families.

Council members have trained and presented at local, national, and international conferences and served on panels to offer unique expertise around a variety of topics, including the importance of fatherhood, building and sustaining family advisory councils, and talking about the transition from tokenism to true partnership.

The work of the CWFAC in partnership with PCANC and DSS in FY25-26 is just scratching the surface of the impact that the council members will make. Working collaboratively has proven to be an uplifting experience to expand their individual capabilities with support, investment, and trust from both PCANC and DSS.

In the coming years, the CWFAC is looking forward to growing into more spaces in child welfare. The council has plans to get into the community more, with focus groups and presentations to expand family voice in more regional and local areas.

Connecting Families to Support, Hope, and Opportunity

Even the strongest families need support, especially when an unexpected event turns their lives upside down. Often, help is available within a community, but families need someone to help them find and access it. That is where family navigation can make a meaningful difference.

In January 2026, Positive Childhood Alliance North Carolina awarded grants to family-serving agencies across 27 counties in North Carolina, including communities impacted by Hurricane Helene. The initiative supports agencies in implementing or expanding family navigation services that help families connect with resources, build resilience, and move forward. Each participating organization received up to $50,000 in funding for the 15-month project period.

The project also provides customized support to participating agencies, including training in the HOPE (Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences) Framework, Protective Factors, and Family Engagement, along with tailored consultation and onsite support. Through this partnership, agencies are strengthening internal processes, improving how they gather and use data, and building their capacity to walk alongside families, parents, and caregivers seeking support.

At the Watauga Children's Council, the grant has helped create a dedicated family navigator role to work directly with families and connect them to community-based resources. The impact has already been felt by many families.

One parent shared, "The Children's Council has kept us on our feet. Kept us from completely wiping out and hitting the ground. And I just can't thank them enough. Because of this Family Resource Center, my family has grown into its full potential, and we are better able to support ourselves."

The project has reinforced the importance of investing in family navigation. With dedicated funding and support, agencies can strengthen their ability to meet families where they are, connect them with the right resources, and provide consistent support that can help families move from crisis toward stability and hope.

"It really felt like I had a whole team of ladies behind me, helping us get through the nasty mud puddle we were in."

– Mom from the Watauga Children's Council

Creating Positive Childhoods Starts With ALL of Us

Building a Statewide Movement

Creating positive childhoods takes more than any one organization, profession, or community. It takes all of us.

That belief is at the heart of the Positive Childhood Alliance, reimagined and launched in Summer 2025 to bring together people across North Carolina who share a commitment to strengthening well-being for all children and families.

The response has been overwhelming! In its first year, the Alliance has grown into a statewide network spanning social services, early childhood, education, health, behavioral health, Family Resource Centers, advocacy, business, law enforcement and community organizations.

But the Alliance is more than a membership network. It is the connective thread across PCANC's work to build a stronger family support ecosystem and change the narrative about what children and families need.

The Alliance is designed to turn connection into action. Members can learn alongside one another, access practical tools, build relationships across communities, and bring new ideas back to their work. For organizations ready to go deeper, the Alliance opens the door to more intensive support from PCANC to put strategies that strengthen families and create positive childhoods into practice.

The Alliance is built to create a ripple effect. What members learn, share and experience through the network does not stay within a webinar, training or gathering. It travels back into organizations, teams and communities across North Carolina.

Members are putting new ideas into practice, sharing resources with colleagues and partners, strengthening how they support families, building new relationships and becoming more confident advocates.

One member described that impact this way:

"The resources and invaluable tools have empowered me to become a much more confident voice and better advocate for the children and families we serve."

The influence is reaching beyond individual members, helping shift how people understand and support families in communities across the state.

Together, Alliance members are challenging the status quo in how North Carolina thinks about, talks about and shows up for children and families. Because creating positive childhoods starts with all of us.

Alliance at a Glance

2025-2026

1,331
Alliance Members

94
North Carolina counties represented

61%
Put what they learned into practice in their work or community

82%
Believe the Alliance is helping shift how people understand and support families

The Future Starts Today

If FY25-26 was the year we planted seeds, FY26-27 will be when we start to see what grows.

Across every corner of our work — equipping professionals, building coalitions, and spreading the message — the year ahead will launch initiatives to move the needle for North Carolina's children and families. Here's a look at what we're most excited about.

Bringing Family Navigation Upstream

We are adapting the Family Success Coach model, reimagined as a prevention-focused Family Navigation approach delivered through Family Resource Centers. Working in partnership with Departments of Social Services in Edgecombe, Guilford, and Henderson counties, PCANC will lead a pilot that creates stronger referral pathways between FRCs, local DSS agencies, and community partners.

The goal is to reach families experiencing elevated stress or need who often don't meet the threshold for formal child welfare involvement but still deserve support, and connect them to voluntary, strengths-based navigation before a crisis occurs. This is primary prevention in action, and we're proud to be piloting it in three communities that represent the breadth of NC's geography and need.

Building Local Champions

Change at the systems level requires champions at the community level. That's the idea behind our new Champions Institute, an initiative designed to equip local community leaders with the knowledge, skills, and tools to advocate for policies and investments that center children and families. When communities have confident, informed advocates making the case for prevention and family support, the conversation changes. We're excited to develop that next generation of champions across the state.

Prevent First NC: Growing the Coalition

Our Prevent First NC Coalition, launched in partnership with Children's Advocacy Centers of NC, is moving into an active expansion phase. Child sexual abuse prevention is urgent, under-resourced, and too often fragmented. The coalition connects cross-sector leaders, aligns fragmented efforts, and builds a unified prevention strategy to protect more children. Visit www.PreventFirstNC.com to learn more.

Messaging That Works Year-Round

For too long, child abuse prevention messaging has been concentrated in April and then set aside. This year, PCANC will change that with a suite of new messaging tools built around family support and positive childhood experiences, designed for year-round use by community partners across North Carolina. A comprehensive toolkit, developed with direct input from statewide partners, will be deployed across North Carolina so the message reaches families in every season.

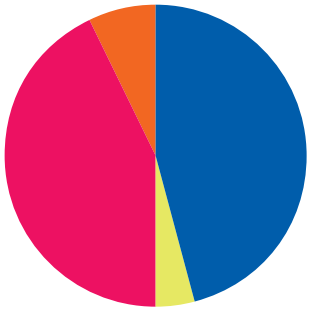
FY26-27 is shaping up to be a year of movement to make positive experiences more possible for our children and families. Your support makes it possible.

2025-2026 Financials

Revenue

Reporting Period: July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026

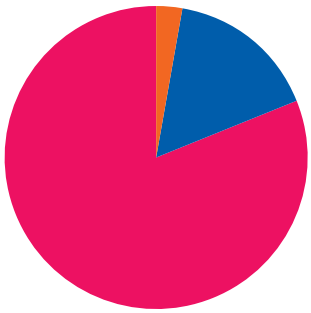
Foundations/Grants	$2,713,500.00
Earned Income Technical Assistance & Coaching, Trainings & Conference Fees	$438,236.02
Contracts	$2,537,720.17
Contributions	$252,204.38
	$5,941,660.57



Expenses

Reporting Period: July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026

Management	$711,695
Programs	$3,513,569
Fundraising	$136,773
	$4,362,038



Includes IDC from grant funding sources.

*Net income received is in excess of expenses as a result of multi-year awards that will be spent in subsequent fiscal years. We often receive grant revenue in one period and spend those funds in subsequent periods.

Thank you to our Funders.

ChildTrust Foundation

DukeHealth

John Rex Endowment
advancing positive change for children

John William Pope Foundation

kNOT Today

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