

Edgecombe County: It Takes a Village



Edgecombe County Public Schools convening attendees in Tarboro, NC, on May 9, 2023.

The Edgecombe County Public School (ECPS) system team takes pride in helping ensure every student who needs mental healthcare gets it. Between school district staff, local providers (including those available via telehealth), and crisis services, ECPS takes a team approach, working together to deliver that care when and where it's needed.

But kids' needs are growing across the district and, simultaneously, becoming more complex. There are more children who are grappling with thoughts about hurting themselves or others.

Getting the additional care these kids require is difficult. In some cases, their name is added to a waitlist with no firm timeline as to when care will be available. In others, they can only get some of the care they need before being discharged.

The parents of these children also need more support. In addition to the stress of finding care, they face uncertainty—about how to help their child after the diagnosis of a mental health challenge, their child's immediate future in school, and how their mental health needs will affect the rest of their household.

Our convening participants focused their efforts on helping the ECPS staff find the additional resources it needs to help these kids with more complex needs—and their families—get the care and support they need.

Edgecombe County Action Plan

Over the course of our 90-minute conversation, we worked with ECPS to develop an action plan:

1. **Connect families to Family Partners.** Family Partners are local residents who have successfully accessed mental healthcare for their children. These family peers are better able to build

connections with other families. They can remove uncertainty and help them make decisions about their child's care. These Partners are coordinated by Edgecombe's System of Care Collaborative.

- 2. Lean on the community.** Edgecombe County's network of mental health support organizations can help ensure ECPS is using every community resource to help kids with more complex needs. These organizations meet regularly as members of the county's System of Care Collaborative to discuss the community's needs, share best practices, and identify resources.

Hospitals and community providers can also coordinate with ECPS to assist with suicide prevention strategies.

- 3. Help families better understand options.** Many families with children who are on Medicaid do not understand the services that are available. Also, families who are on private insurance can often access publicly funded services by reaching out to Standard Plans.

Convening Participants

Thank you to all of Edgecombe County's community and behavioral health leaders who joined i2i and the ECPS team for our convening:

- [AmeriHealth Caritas](#)
- [Eastpointe](#)
- [Mental Health Transformation Alliance](#)
- [NC DHHS, Division of Child and Family Well-Being](#)
- [NC Families United](#)
- [NC Psychiatry Access Line](#)
- [NC Youth and Family Voices Amplified](#)
- [WellCare of North Carolina](#)