Ellie is smart and loving. But she almost didn’t know it.

In the past, children were considered ready for kindergarten if they could say the ABCs, count, identify colors, and write their first name.

This is still true. Yet, brain research now shows that school readiness must include a child’s ability to follow directions, express feelings using words, and adjust emotionally to unexpected situations.

Thankfully, Ellie had access to our comprehensive developmental opportunities in the first five years of her life. She is excelling in school and has the confidence to keep succeeding.

The evidence is irrefutable — and profound.

Studies show that the first five years of a child’s life are a time of rapid brain development – a once-only window of opportunity when a child’s mind becomes wired for success (or hardship) that will last into adulthood.

Well before kindergarten, children are building the social, emotional, cognitive, and academic road map that will guide their futures.

Many children who do not have access to quality Pre-K programs and services start behind and constantly struggle to catch up.

Too many in Forsyth County never catch up.