

Larry King's Clubhouse: On-Site Childcare in an Urban Courthouse

Charlotte, North Carolina

WHY OFFER CHILDCARE IN A COURTHOUSE?

Mecklenburg County is the second largest county in North Carolina, home to over one million people and the Charlotte metro area. In the early 2000s, judges and court personnel expressed concerns about children causing disruptions in court. Stakeholders looked for a solution, and decided on an on-site childcare program in the courthouse. The program, Larry King's Clubhouse, officially opened in July 2001.

MORE THAN TWO DECADES OF SUCCESS

Over 20 years later, Larry King's Clubhouse is still operating. When a new courthouse was built in 2017, the program got a new space designed with childcare in mind. Today, the Clubhouse has five staff members across two classrooms: one for infants and toddlers between 6 weeks and 2.5 years old, and another for kids ages 2.5 to 12. It operates from 8am to 5pm Monday through Friday, and children can stay for as long as their caregiver's court is in session. Children have access to toys, games, snacks, and a secure outdoor play area. Caregivers can make a reservation or, if there is space, simply drop their child off as a walk-in on the day they come to court.

Every person needs to be individually buzzed into the clubhouse and caregivers must complete an enrollment form. Caregivers include an emergency contact in case they are taken into custody.

INSIGHT FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Gloria Peters, the Executive Director of Larry King's Clubhouse, provided insight about the program in an interview with the Lab. Larry King's Clubhouse is a non-profit organization, not a court mandated service. She explained that the program is funded primarily by Mecklenburg County, though it also receives private donations and grants. She noted that Larry King's Clubhouse is classified as drop-in/short-term childcare in North Carolina, a designation makes it possible for the program to operate without the additional costs and logistical challenges of full licensure.

Learn more about Larry King's Clubhouse [here](#).