



EVOLUTION OF “AT RISK” CRITERIA

More at Four Program
2001-2010

Patsy Pierce, Ph.D., Research Division

S.L. 2001-424

- **Section 21.76B.(a)** established funds to develop and implement "More At Four" , a voluntary prekindergarten pilot program for at-risk **four-year-olds**.
- **Section 21.76B.(c)** directs DHHS & DPI, under the guidance of the Pre-K Task force, to develop the program and details required components of the program.

ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION REQUIREMENTS

- **S.L. 2001-424, Section 21.76B.(c)**

- (1) A process and system for identifying children **at risk** of academic failure.

- - (2) A process and system for identifying children who have **never been served** in a formal early education program such as child care, public or private preschool, Head Start, Early Head Start, early intervention programs or other such programs, who demonstrate educational needs on the basis of a prekindergarten assessment, and who are eligible to enter kindergarten the next school year.

S.L. 2003-284, SECTION 10.40.(C): UNDERSERVED CHILDREN ADDED

- (2) A process and system for identifying children who are not being served first priority in formal early education programs, such as child care, public or private preschools, Head Start, Early Head Start, early intervention programs, or other such programs, who demonstrate educational needs, and who are eligible to enter kindergarten the next school year, **as well as children who are underserved.**

IDENTIFYING “AT RISK FOR ACADEMIC FAILURE”

- FY 2001-2003: Risk factor scoring rubric used, including:
 - Family income (**Federal Poverty guidelines** for free or reduced price lunch)
 - Child’s health status
 - Identified disabilities
 - Parent education
 - Parent employment
 - Family composition
 - Housing stability
 - English proficiency
 - Minority status

- Handout a/b
- Source: 2002-2003 More at Four Program Operations and Information Manual

2004-2010: SHIFT TO SMI AS PRIMARY ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION FACTOR

- **S.L. 2004-124 SECTION 10.40.(f)** Beginning in the 2004-2005 fiscal year, the "More At Four" program shall establish income eligibility requirements for the program not to exceed seventy-five percent (75%) of the State median income to make the program consistent with the child care subsidy requirements. Up to twenty percent (20%) of children enrolled may have family incomes in excess of seventy-five percent (75%) of median income if they have other designated risk factors.

ELIGIBILITY FOR FAMILIES ABOVE 75% OF SMI (LIMITED TO 20% OF CHILDREN SERVED)

- Gross income cannot exceed 300% of Federal poverty guidelines (until 2007-2008*) AND they must meet one of the criteria:
 - Limited English Proficiency (LEP) as indicated by the family and/or child speaking limited or no English in the home.
 - Identified Disability as indicated by the child having a current Individualized Education Plan (IEP).
 - Chronic Health Condition as indicated by a health care provider diagnosis, e.g., asthma, sickle cell anemia, etc.
 - Developmental/Educational need as indicated by the child performance result on a developmental screening instrument.
- Source: 2004-2010 More at Four Program Operations and Information Manual
 - Handout c/d
 - *Families could be above this range if the child still had a risk factor beginning with the 2009-2009 school year.

MILITARY FAMILIES ADDED (REGARDLESS OF INCOME)

○ S.L. 2007-323, Section 7.24.(d)

- Furthermore, any age-eligible child of (i) an active duty member of the armed forces of the United States, including the North Carolina National Guard, State military forces, or a reserve component of the armed forces, who is ordered to active duty by the proper authority within the last 18 months or expected to be ordered within the next 18 months, or (ii) a member of the armed forces of the United States, including the North Carolina National Guard, State military forces, or a reserve component of the armed forces, who was injured or killed while serving on active duty, shall be eligible for the program.

• (handout f)

PRIORITIZING: “UNSERVED” AND “UNDERSERVED” 2001-2010

○ Unserved

- (a) Children who have never been served in any preschool or childcare setting and meet at-risk criteria (serve children on subsidy waiting list first).
- (b) Children currently unserved (may have been previously served) and on subsidy waiting list and meet at-risk criteria.
- (c) Children currently unserved (may have been previously served) and not eligible for subsidy, and meet at-risk criteria.
- (d) (added in 2004-2005) Children in child care less than 5 months in the prior year.

○ Source: 2002-2010 More at Four Program Operations and Information Manuals (handouts e/f)

PRIORITIZING “UNSERVED” AND “UNDERSERVED”

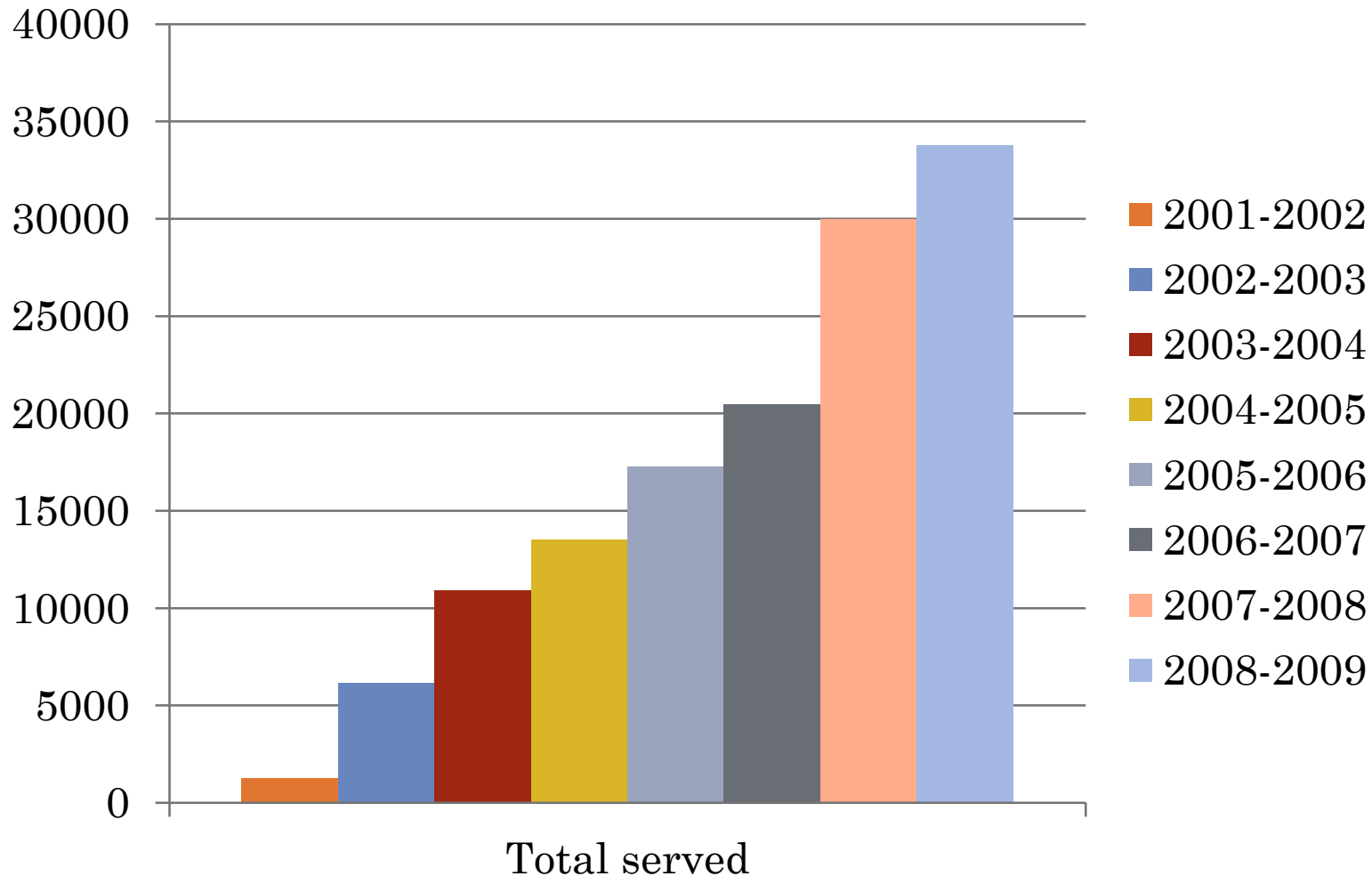
○ Underserved

- (a) Children in a child care or preschool program who are eligible for, but not receiving, child care subsidy and meeting at-risk criteria. (moved to (b) in 2007-2008)
- (b) Children in **unregulated** child care not meeting More at Four standards and meet at-risk criteria. (moved to (a) in 2007-2008)
- (c) Other children who meet at risk criteria, including those in prekindergarten or child care not meeting More at Four standards.

SUMMARY

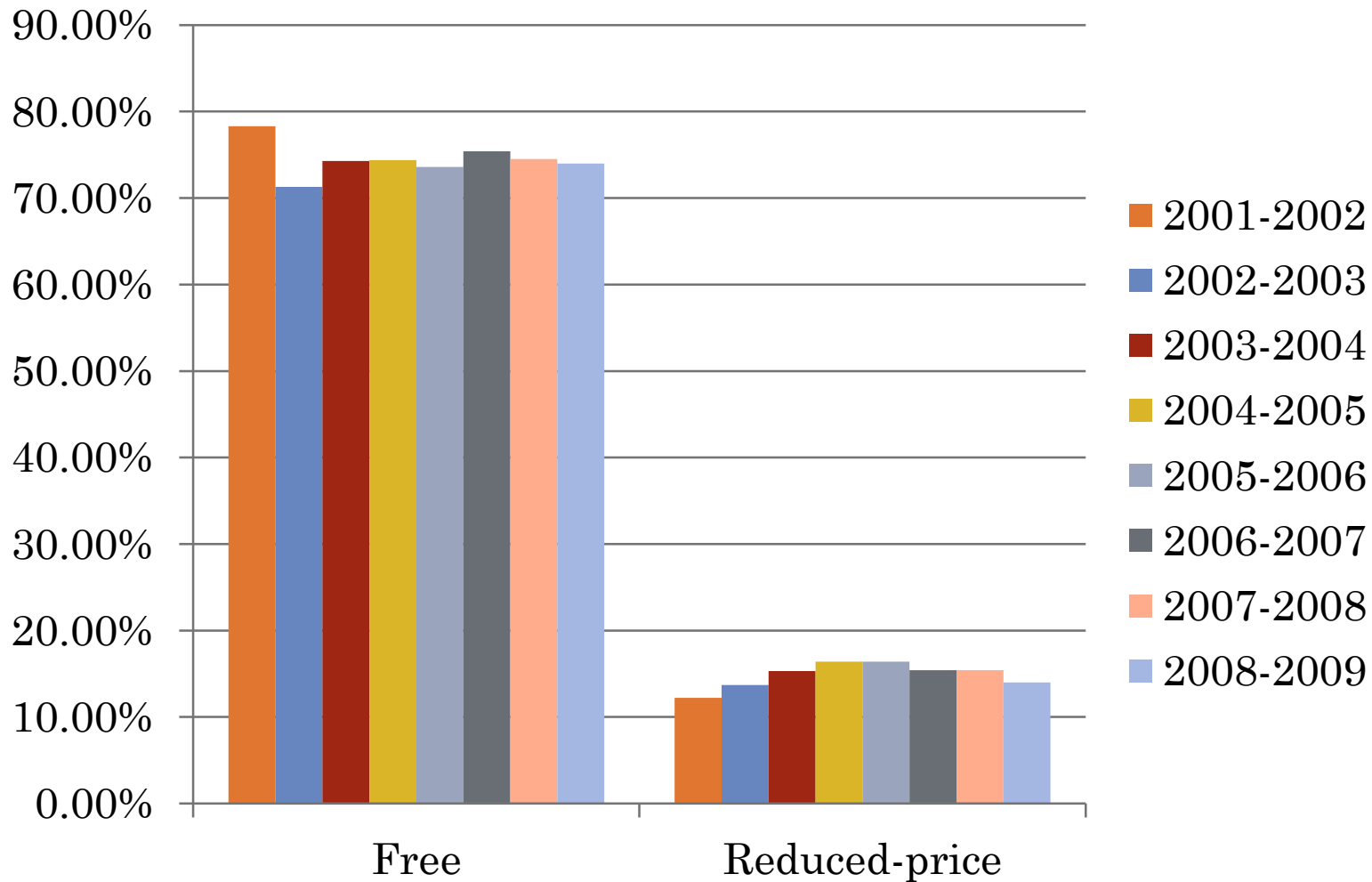
- At Risk: Primarily based on income level
 - 2001-2002; 2002-2003: Scoring rubric: Children qualified for free or reduced lunch and other risk factors
 - 2003-2004: Scoring rubric or Income Eligibility
 - 2004-2010: Income eligibility (75% of SMI). 20% of the children could be above 75% of SMI, if they had another risk factor
 - **Service Priority:** According to MAF program manual information (2002-2010), “unserved” children were given top service priority and “underserved” were given last service priority

TOTAL NUMBERS OF CHILDREN SERVED IN MAF 2001-2009

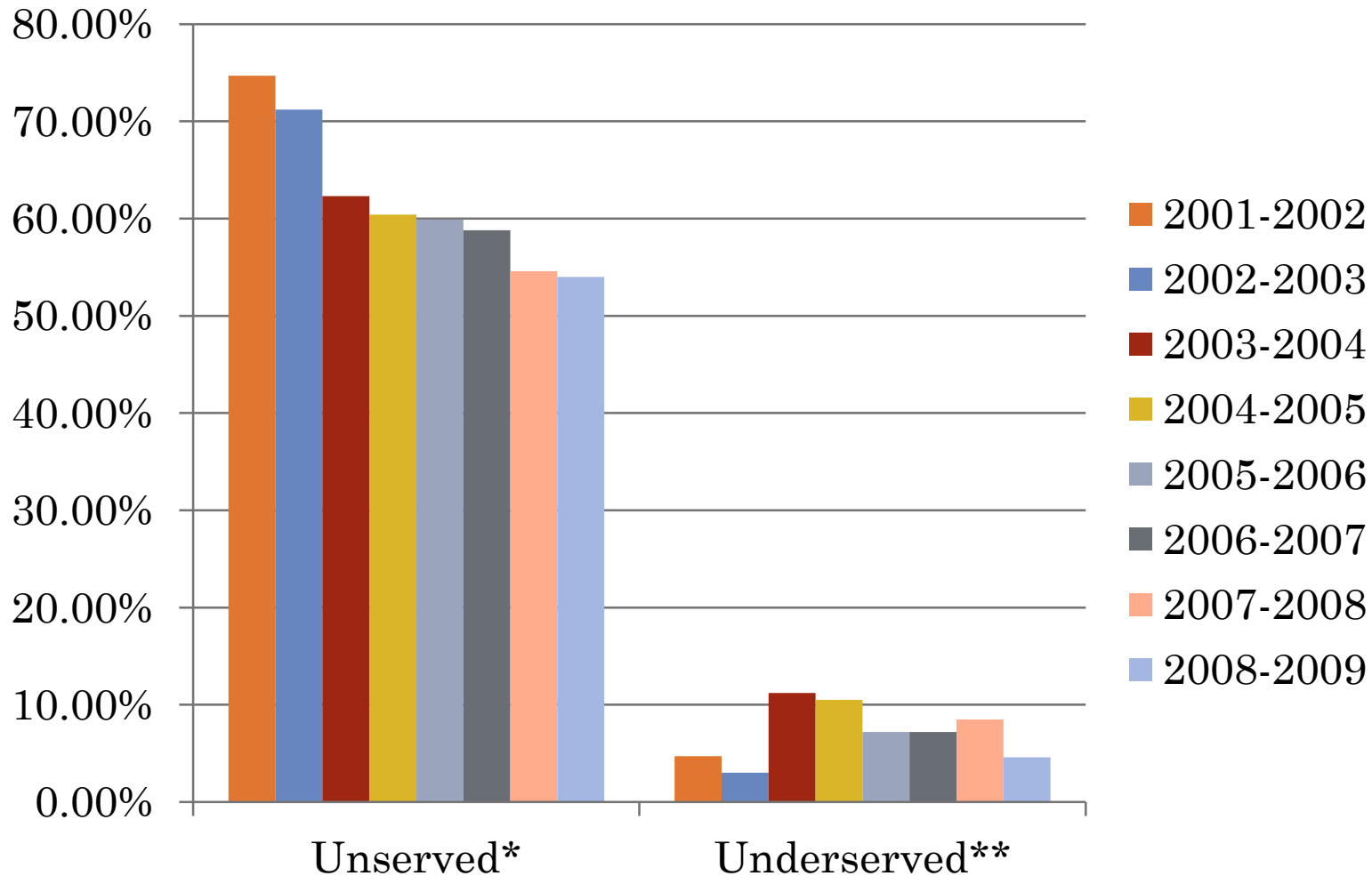


Peisner-Feinberg, et al, 2003; 2009

AT RISK: FREE OR REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH



SERVICE PRIORITY: PERCENTAGE OF UNSERVED/UNDERSERVED CHILDREN IN MAF 2001-2009



*never been served

**<MAF standards

CITATIONS: MAF INFORMATION/DATA

- NC More at Four Prekindergarten Program Operations and Information Manuals, 2002-2010.
- Peisner-Feinberg, E. S. (2003). Child and Program Characteristics of the *North Carolina More at Four Pre-kindergarten Program: Year 1* (January - June, 2002). Chapel Hill, NC: FPG Child Development.
- Peisner-Feinberg, E. S. & Maris, C. L. (2005). Evaluation of the North Carolina *More at Four Pre-kindergarten Program: Year 2 Report* (July 1, 2002-June 30, 2003). Chapel Hill, NC: FPG Child Development Institute.
- Peisner-Feinberg, E. S. & Schaaf, J. M. (2009). Evaluation of the North Carolina More at Four Pre-kindergarten Program: A Look across Time at Children's Outcomes and Classroom Quality from Pre-k through Kindergarten (2003-2009). Chapel Hill, NC: FPG Child Development Institute.

CITATIONS: POVERTY AND ACADEMIC RISK

- B.D. Rampey, G.S. Dione, P.I. Donahue, “NAEP 2008 Trends in Academic Progress (NCES 2009-479)” national center for educational Sciences, U.S. DOE, Washington, DC, 2009).
- D.K. Dickinson, Science, **333**, 964 (2011).
- G. Farkas,K. Beron, Social Science Research, **33**, 464 (2004).
- M. Vasilyeva, H. Waterfall, J. Huttenlocher, Developmental Science, 11, **84** (2008).
- NICHD Early Childhood Research Network, Developmental Psychology,**41**, 428 (2005).