



HHS Oversight, Subcommittee on Statewide Early Education and Family Support Programs

Cindy Watkins, President of The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc.
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- A child's early years set the foundation.
- Adverse experiences disrupt development.
- Soft skills are for success in school, work, and life.

Smart Start is a nationally recognized leader in early childhood and healthy development.

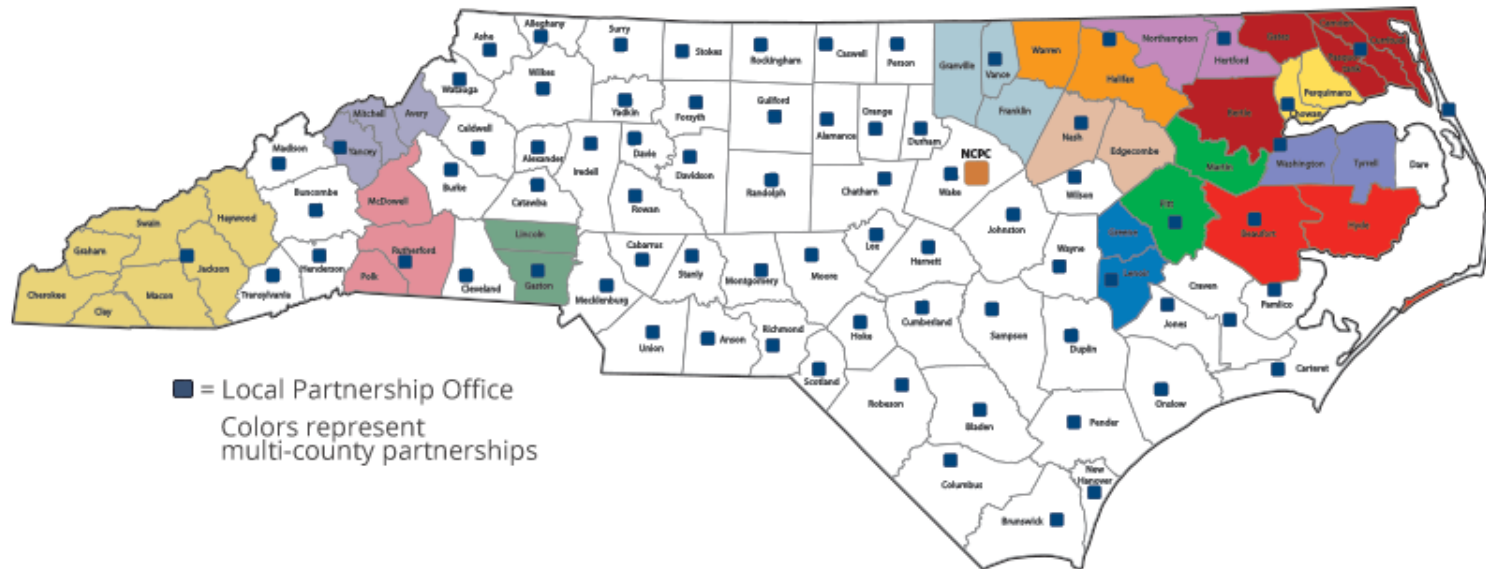
“North Carolina’s Smart Start initiative has been the national pace setter for early childhood systems for more than two decades. A system that is flexible enough for local decision making, yet accountable to the public at the state level, has provided young children access to high quality early learning in ways that is simply unprecedented in the United States.”

-- Rhian Evans Allvin, Director, National Association for the Education of Young Children

“Our business community in Virginia early on looked to Smart Start for advice as we created Smart Beginnings, helping us think about effective program practices, accountability, measuring performance in our community efforts and creating programs to maximize outcomes for young children.”

-- Kathy Glazer, Director, Virginia Early Childhood Foundation

The Smart Start network provides expertise, guidance and infrastructure to ensure NC children receive the care and nurturing they need to thrive.



- 75 nonprofit local partnerships
- Led by the North Carolina Partnership for Children

Tailored to meet the specific needs of each community, Smart Start invests in:

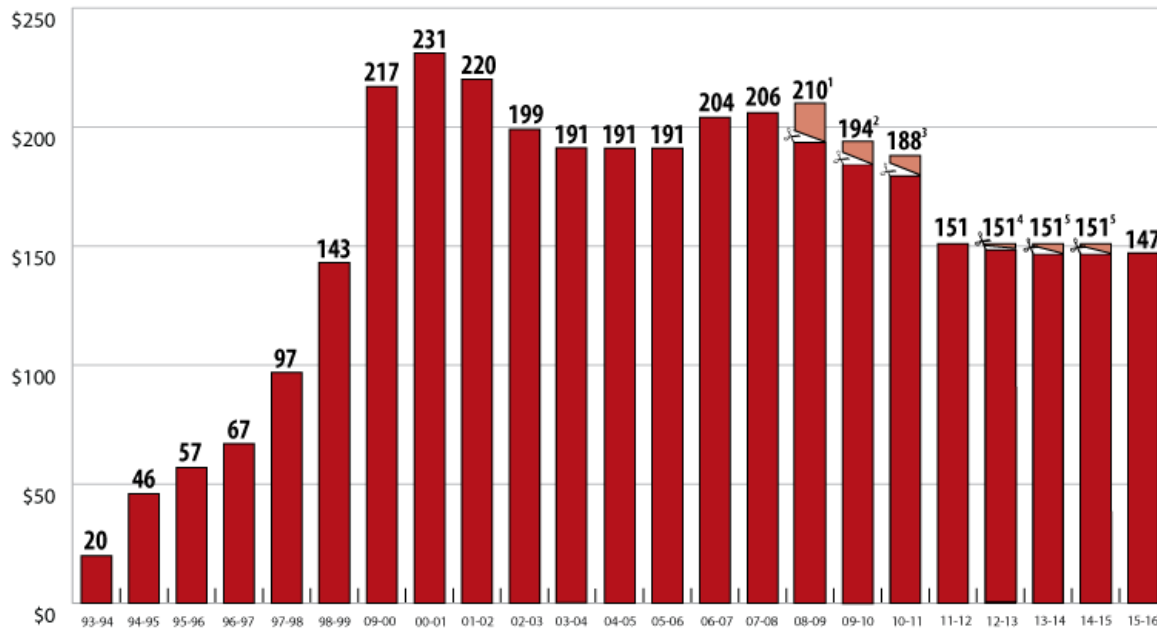
- Early care and education
- Family Support
- Health and Development
- Early Literacy

Children are ready to succeed, lead productive lives, and contribute to a vibrant NC.



Smart Start Appropriation History

Fiscal Years 1993-1994 through 2015-2016 (rounded to millions)



¹One-time budget reduction of \$16M reduced available 08-09 budget to \$194M

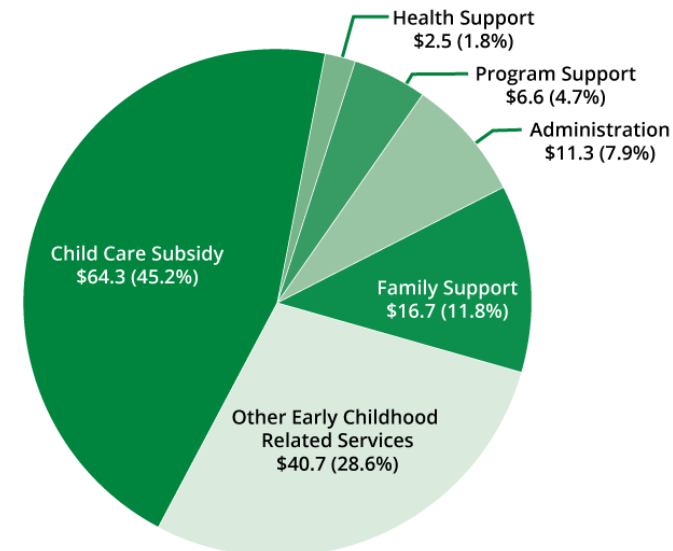
²One-time budget reduction of \$7M reduced available 09-10 budget to \$187M

³One-time budget reduction of \$6M reduced available 10-11 budget to \$182M

⁴One-time budget reduction of \$1M reduced available 12-13 budget to \$150M

⁵Recurring budget reduction of \$3.7M reduced available 13-15 budget to \$147M

Fiscal Year 2014-15 Total Local Partnership Expenditures: \$142.2 million



Statewide Governance

At the state level, NCPC:

- Ensures compliance and accountability
- Pushes for excellence
- Supports Local Partnerships

Statewide Governance

- Train local boards and staff on fiduciary oversight.
- Monitor local partnerships to ensure compliance.
- Support centralized accounting, contracting functions.
- NCPC has had 12 consecutive years of clean audits from the State Auditor.
- State Treasurer's award for excellence in accounting and financial management.

Statewide Excellence

- Guide partnerships toward selection and implementation of evidence-based, evidence-informed programs.
- Facilitate the sharing of resources, innovative ideas, and solutions across the network.
- Maintain centralized portal for collection of program data.

Local Flexibility

- Identify the needs and resources of their communities.
- Use local data to drive decision making.
- Increase the health, well-being and development of their children.

Early Care and Education

- Raising the Star Ratings
- A Value Add to Subsidy
- Infrastructure Support for Pre-K

Raising the Star Ratings

- Partnerships work directly with child care centers to improve quality with support and technical assistance.
- Children in 4 and 5 star programs increased from 33% in 2001 to 75% in 2015.
- Children in low quality, 1 and 2 star programs decreased from 46% in 2001 to 3% in 2015.

Raising the Star Ratings

In Brunswick County, WAGE\$ provides education-based salary supplements to teachers and child care providers.

- Smart Start funds the program that rewards teachers.
- By rewarding teacher education and continuity of care, children have:
 - more stable relationships
 - better educated teachers

“This program has made all the difference in the world to me. Since the WAGE\$ Project began, I have gone from having a high school diploma to having my degree in Birth through Kindergarten Education.” – Early care teacher in Brunswick County

A Value Add to Subsidy

- Smart Start uses subsidy funds for innovative approaches that:
 - Boost quality and improve learning environments
 - Promote access for highest risk children
 - Support child care teachers
 - Engage families and parents
- Smart Start starting shifting subsidy funds to only 4 and 5 star centers in mid-2000s.
 - This became state law in 2011.

A Value Add to Subsidy

In Vance County, the number of teen pregnancies has dropped 42.5% from 2010 to 2013. 97% of participants stayed in school.

The Franklin Granville Vance Smart Start worked with the local DSS and Health Department to address a high teen pregnancy rate in the county.

- Adolescent Parenting Program
- Teen parents must remain in school
- Attend group parenting classes
- To receive subsidy funds for child care

A Value Add to Subsidy

In Nash and Edgecombe Counties parents applying for a subsidy scholarship have the opportunity to participate in parenting programs.

- The Down East Partnership for Children weaves family support /parent engagement into subsidy services.
- This results in the strengthening of the entire family unit.
- Parents actively participate in their child's education during the early years and are more likely to participate in later schooling as well.

Infrastructure Support for Pre-K

- Smart Start administers NC Pre-K in 56 counties.
- Partnership Board Chairs co-chair NC Pre-K Committees in all counties.
- Smart Start helps teachers obtain Birth-through-Kindergarten Licensure (required for NC Pre-K lead teachers).

Infrastructure Support for Pre-K

In Surry County, there is a consistent, high quality NC Pre-K program across three different school systems.

- There are three separate systems serving the children of Surry County.
- The Early Childhood Partnership administers NC Pre-K in order to ensure that the program is implemented in a way that maintains quality across the systems.
- Resulting in cost savings for the county because of the efficiencies of a centralized administration for three systems.

Infrastructure Support for Pre-K

In Wake County, when families apply for Pre-K, they complete and submit a universal application that is used for Subsidy, NC Pre-K, Head Start, and Title One.

- This collaborative, cross-agency process led by Wake County Smart Start identifies the need of individual families, targets resources, enhances program collaboration to better serve more children.
- The Pre-K function of the system was integrated into DCDEE's database for use in every county as a way for NC Pre-K providers to gather and submit required data.

Supporting NC Families

- Parents are the first and most important teachers in a child's life.
- Parent education programs can give parents tools to increase knowledge of development and positive parenting practices.

Supporting NC Families

In Guilford County, 84% of parents participating in Parents As Teachers increased engagement with young children.

- The Guilford County Partnership for Children offers PAT
 - evidence-based program
 - provides information, support and encouragement to parents
 - helps their children develop optimally during the early years
- This includes home visits by parent educators, parent group meetings about early childhood and parenting, developmental and health screenings, and referrals to community resources.

Supporting NC Families

- Over 2,400 families are participating in ongoing parenting programs.
- 86% of families participating in PAT were linked to community resources.
- Parents participating in Incredible Years demonstrated an increase in the use of appropriate discipline, positive parenting practices, and setting clear expectations.

Advancing Child Health and Development

- Instilling healthy behaviors early can have lifelong benefits.
- Smart Start improves outcome for children by:
 - Working with medical providers, health departments
 - Preventing childhood obesity
 - Ensure screening for developmental delays

Advancing Child Health and Development

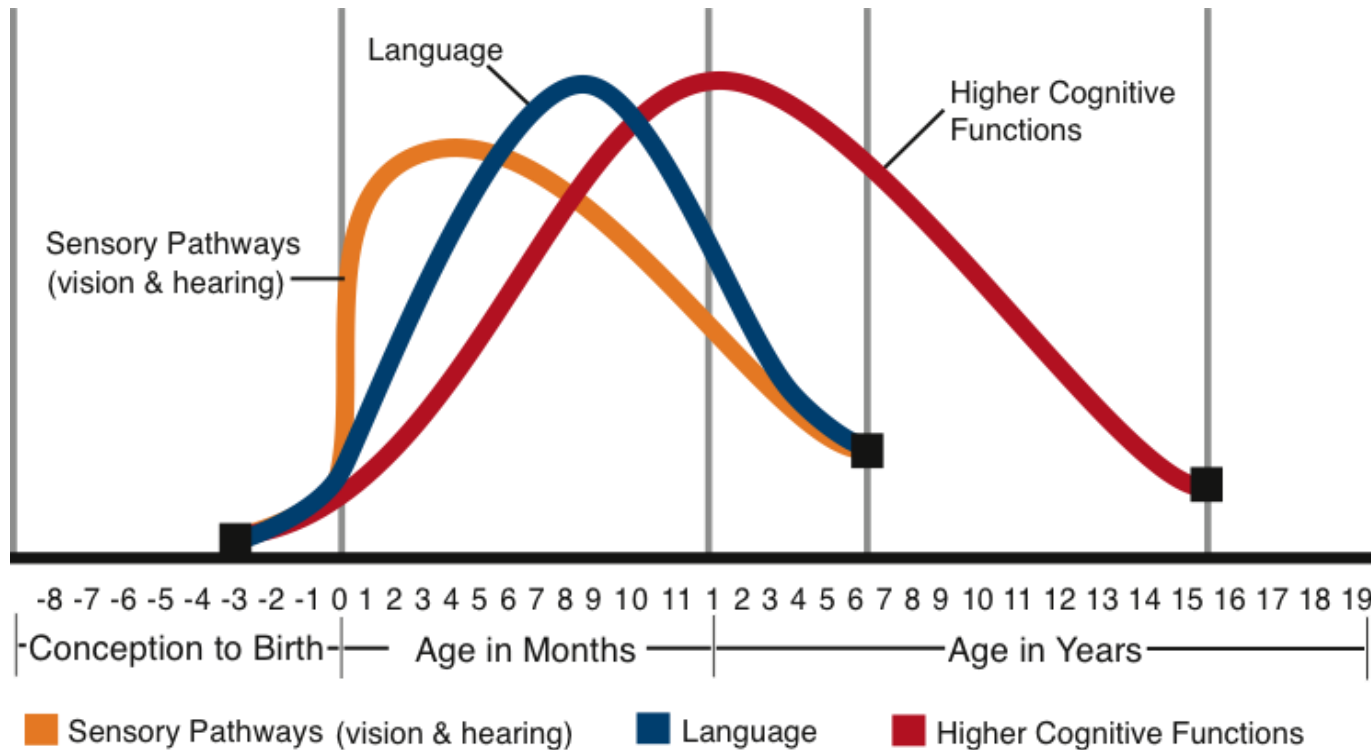
In Randolph County, 75% of child care centers have outdoor learning environments so that children have engaging outdoor spaces to get exercise, grow vegetables, and learn.

- NCPC partnered with the BCBSNC Foundation to leverage \$6 million to increase the number of children starting kindergarten at a healthy weight.
- Shape NC has engaged communities spanning 27 counties and 196 centers to improve healthy eating and active play for over one thousand of our state's children.
- The program is growing to engage 240 additional child care centers.

Advancing Child Health and Development

- Shape NC is serving nearly 150 child care centers across the state.
 - Using Body Mass Index (BMI), children that attended Shape NC centers are much less likely to be obese (9.6%) than children attending for less than 6 months (15.6%).
- Over 360,000 children are participating in ABCD.
 - 94% of children due for developmental screenings were screened.

Promoting Early Literacy



Graph Source: C.A. Nelson (2000)

Promoting Early Literacy

In Dare County, 95% of children are participating in Reach Out and Read which has proven to increase the amount of time parents spend reading to children.

- The Children and Youth Partnership of Dare County, worked with a large pediatric office in the county to implement ROR.
- The program supports doctors in their efforts to “prescribe” reading to young children and families during well-child visits.

Promoting Early Literacy

- Over 45,000 children are participating in Reach Out and Read.
 - Families participating in the program are significantly more likely to read to their child every day.
 - 74 medical offices in 40 counties are participating.
- Over 7,000 children are participating in Raising a Reader.

Making NC a Leader in Early Education

- Smart Start and NC Pre-K have proven to increase 3rd grade reading and math scores and reduce special education placements.
- More than 20 states have adopted components of the Smart Start model in creating their own systems.

Recommendations

“No matter which structure a state uses, setting a statewide vision for early childhood education and establishing a means to coordinate agencies to achieve the vision can play a significant role in bridging the divide between early childhood services and the K-12 system.”

-- Report of the SREB Early Childhood Commission – Building a Strong Foundation

“Advisory bodies like the ECACs are not administrative... ECACs can serve a complementary role to the state’s administration of early childhood, including as state agencies act on the recommendations of the ECAC.”

-- A Framework for Choosing a State-Level Early Childhood Governance System, BUILD Initiative

Recommendations

Strengthen coordination of state level governance by formalizing collaboration of early education administrative leaders to:

- Create statewide vision with aligned strategies and priorities.
- Bridge early childhood programs and K-12 system.
- Enhance early literacy strategies.
- Determine shared early childhood indicators to track across state agencies.

Recommendations

Further streamline application processes for families.

- Technology to support program and service alignment.
- Better match families and children to programs.
- Manage a joint waiting list.



Questions?