

Joint Legislative Task Force on the Consolidation of Early Childhood Education and Care

Local Perspective

presented by

Wake County SmartStart

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www.wakesmartstart.org



Our Vision

Working to ensure children, birth to five, are prepared for success in school and life.



Why Early Childhood?



Our Community

- Most populous county in North Carolina
- Estimated population of 900,066 as of 2008
- 74,302 children birth to five resided in Wake County in 2008
- 21,000 children of all elementary school students were eligible for free or reduced lunch in 2008



Our Community

- One of every three children, birth to five, was Medicaid eligible
- 20,000 children, birth to five, were enrolled in regulated child care (1 out of 4)
- Average monthly cost of high quality care ranging from \$851 for 4 year olds to \$1,127 for infants



Our 74,302 Young Children

- 5800 children were supported through child care subsidy assistance as of May, 2009
- As of June, 2009, the subsidy waiting list had grown to over 5,800 equaling the number served through subsidy



Our 74,302 Young Children

- 1,257 children enrolled in More at Four
- 608 approved slots for Title I in WCPSS
- 508 children, 3-4 years old, enrolled in Head Start
- 182 children enrolled in Early Head Start



Our Partnership

- Wake County SmartStart Incorporated as a 501(c) 3 in 1994
- Funded through Smart Start in 1996
- Funded through More at Four in 2001
- Governed by 22 Board Members, led by Board Chair David Zonderman, PhD



Our Work

- Assess Community Needs
 - Geographic Assessment
 - Grant Applications
 - Hope Six Grant
 - Head Start Needs Assessment
 - Wake Health Alliance
 - Funding-Community, State and National
 - Nurse Family Partnership
 - Institute of Medicine Study with Young Child Mental Health Collaborative
 - Data and Information that drives local decisions
 - Trends in Pre-School Special Education



Our Work

- Assess Community Needs
- Develop an Early Childhood Agenda
 - Stakeholders: Businesses, Health and Human Services agencies, Schools, County Government, Families, Faith Community and many more working towards:
 - Common Outcomes
 - Coordination and Service Improvement
 - Expanded Resources/ Community Investments



Our Work

- Assess Community Needs
- Develop an Early Childhood Agenda
- Find, build, and create linkages on common issues
 - Relationships
 - Core Values
 - Trust



Our Work

- Assess Community Needs
- Develop an Early Childhood Agenda
- Find, build, create linkages on common issues
- Contract for services in the areas of Early Care and Education, Health and Family Support
 - Efficiency
 - Effectiveness
 - Best Practice
 - Innovation



Our Work

- Assess Community Needs
- Develop an Early Childhood Agenda
- Find, build, create linkages on common issues
- Contract for services
- Evaluate
 - System Improvement
 - Identification of Unmet Needs
 - Drives the Planning Process



Our Work

- Assess Community Needs
- Develop an Early Childhood Agenda
- Find, build, create linkages on common issues
- Contract for Services
- Monitor, evaluate and report results
- Repeat
 - Build on Success
 - Learn
 - Share



Why Does It Work?



- Local leaders are responsible for the decisions and outcomes that impact their community.
- The community expects the best for their children.
- They own the decisions.
- They know the community.



Why Does It Work?



- Local administration allows for flexibility to quickly respond to emerging issues and opportunities
- Seamless- to families and providers
- Broad community participation creating a sense of ownership



Our Work

Smart Start Funds

- 26 funded programs run by 13 partner agencies to address:
 - Early Care and Education
 - Family Support
 - Health
- Planning and Coordination of Services

More At Four Funds

- 1,257 slots
- 54 More at Four sites with a combined total of 86 classrooms
- Collaborative Partners
 - Universal Application
 - Database/Technology Project



Our Work-More at Four

Partnership

- Recruitment
- Screening
- Assignment
- Coordination
- Contracting
- Staff Development
- Monitoring

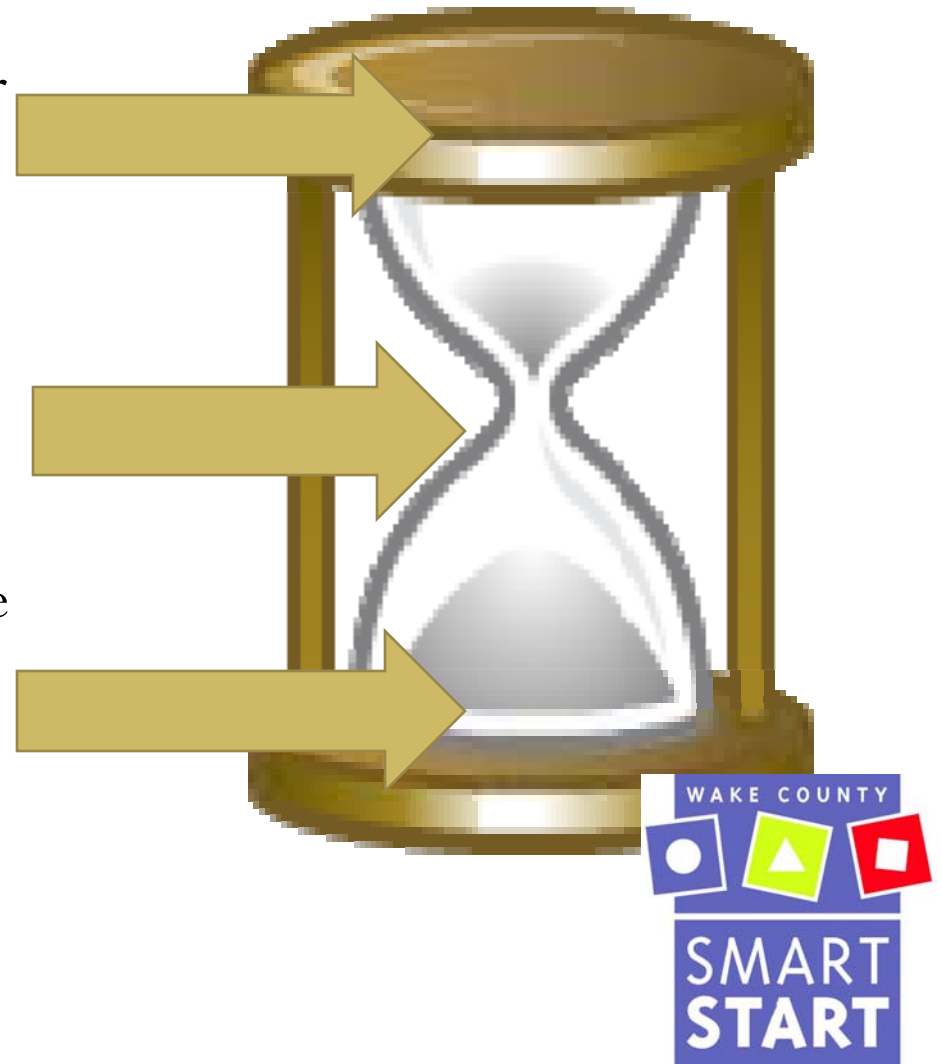
Providers

- Classroom Instruction
- Child Evaluations
- Home Visits
- Family Involvement
- Referrals
- Continuing Education



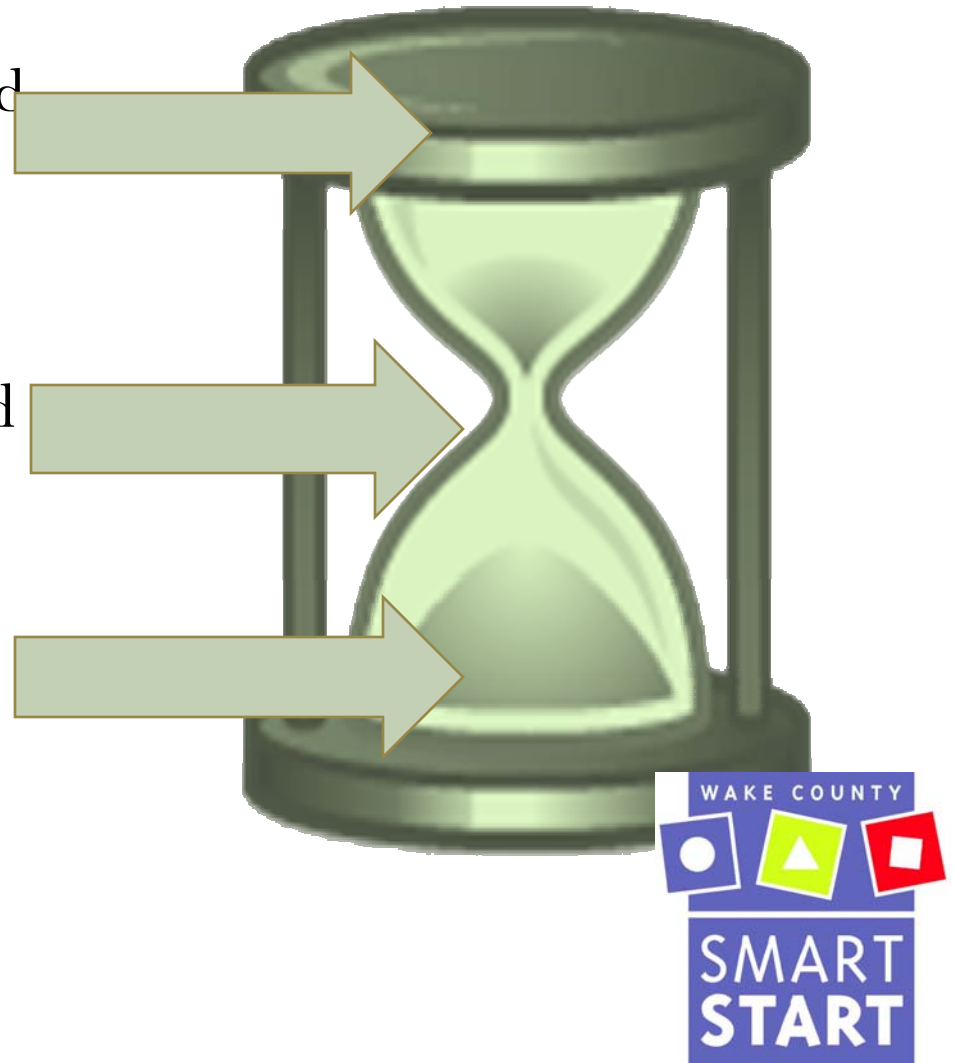
Our Work

- State funding is allocated to Wake County SmartStart for specific services and goals.
- WCSS meets the grant and contract requirements for each funding source and provides or contracts in the community for services.
- Local service providers serve children and meet Wake County Smart Start guidelines.



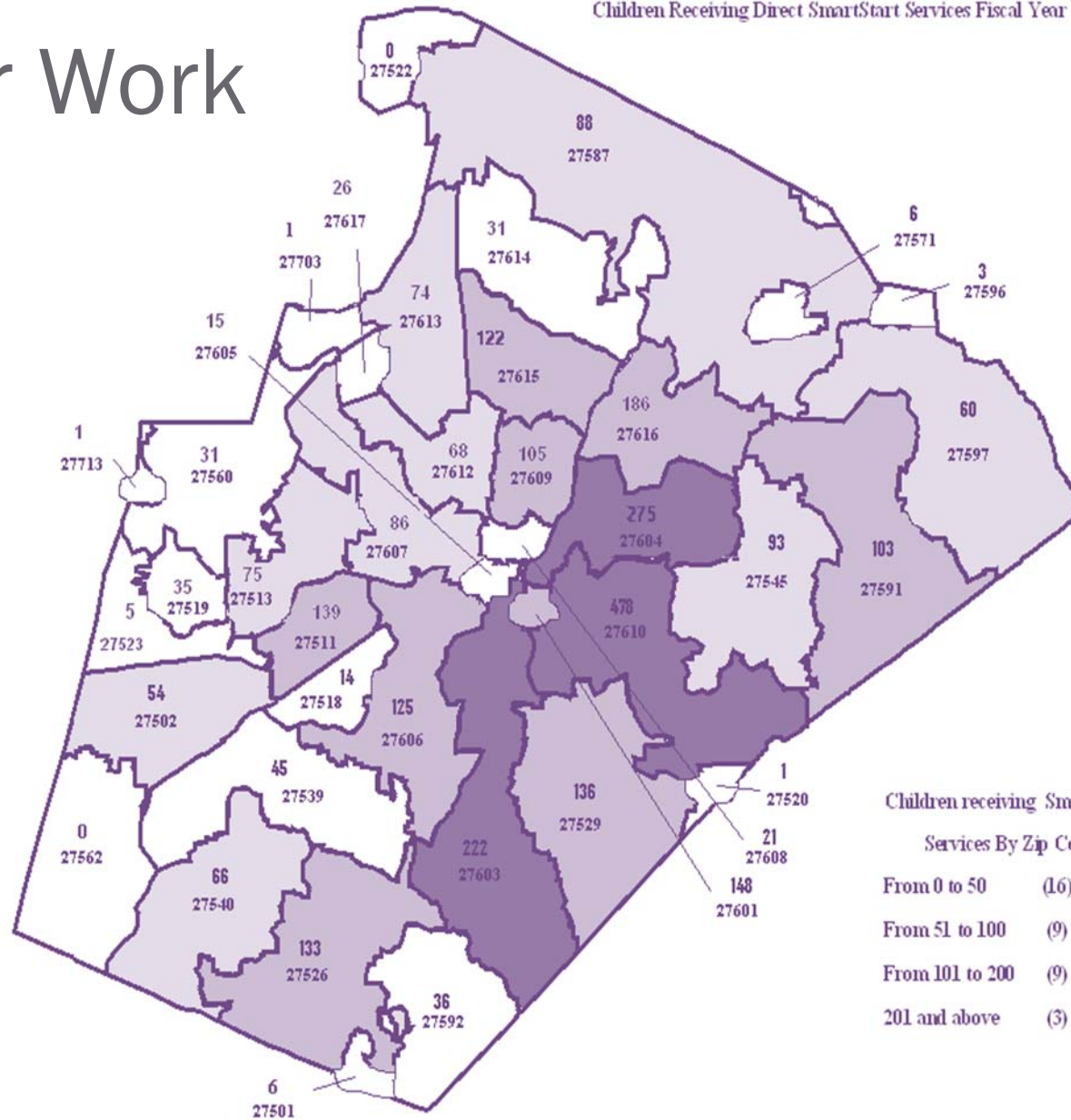
Our Work

- State organizations bring national research, ideas and innovation to communities.
- WCSS uses this information to educate and encourage the community around best practices and models.
- Local service providers receive training and improve systems based on new information



Our Work

Children Receiving Direct SmartStart Services Fiscal Year 08/09



Children receiving SmartStart

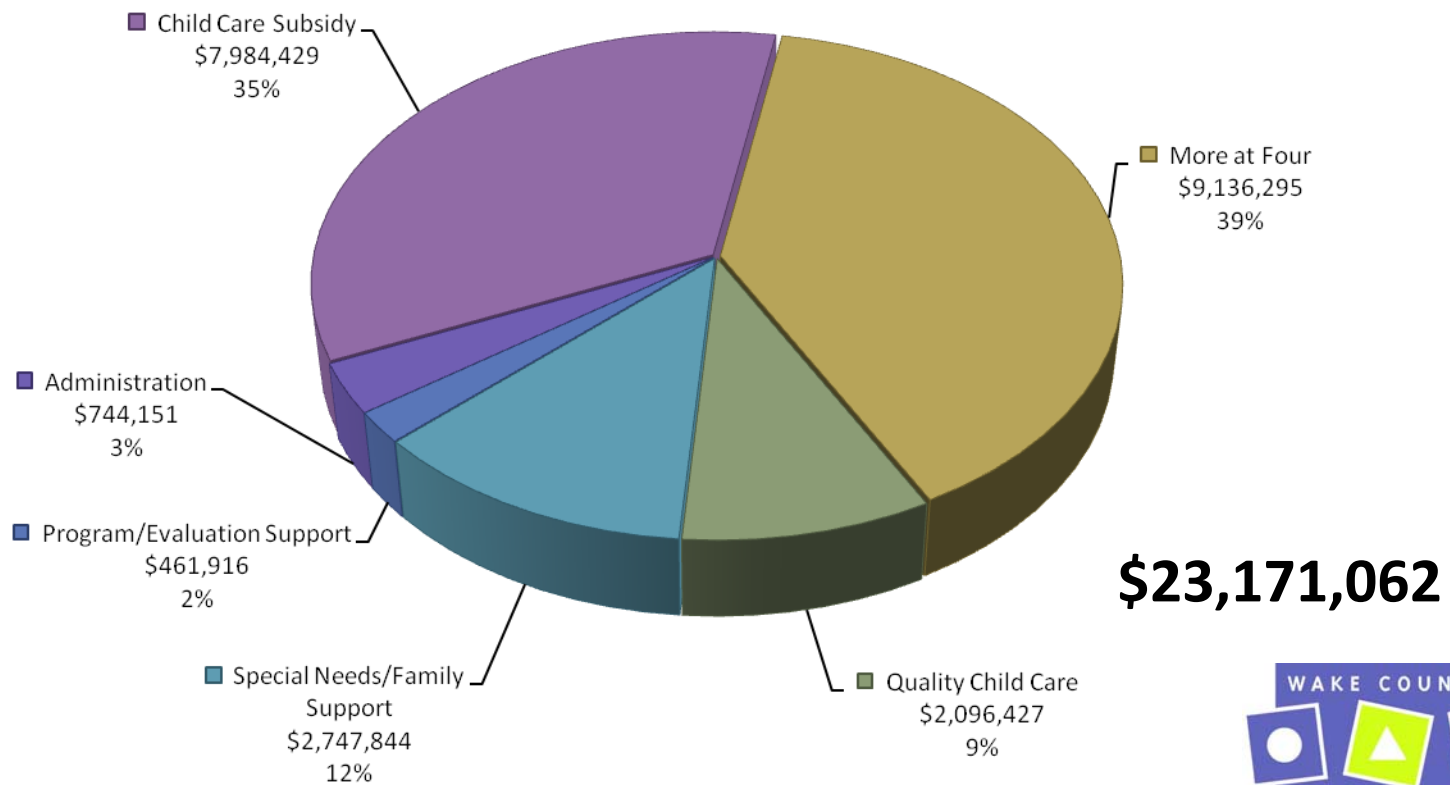
Services By Zip Code

From 0 to 50	(16)	<input type="checkbox"/>
From 51 to 100	(9)	<input type="checkbox"/>
From 101 to 200	(9)	<input type="checkbox"/>
201 and above	(3)	<input type="checkbox"/>



Our Work

Wake County SmartStart Functional Expenditures FY 08/09



Our Successes

- Universal Application for Pre-K children in Wake County
 - Wake County Public School System
 - Telamon Corporation Head Start
 - Wake County Human Services
 - More at Four
- Improved Outcomes for Wake County
 - Immediate, short and long term returns on investment
 - Better prepares children to learn in the public education system
 - Vital and valuable part of our education and economic development infrastructure
- Ability to target children who are most at risk



Our Challenges

- Unserved and underserved children
 - Wait Lists are growing
- Instability of funding
 - Providers are vulnerable
- Emerging Issues
 - Behavioral Health
- Long Term Economic Impact



Our Concern



Our Information

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