

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

BUILDING **BRIGHTER** FUTURES.

Smart Start

AT-A-GLANCE

Smart Start is working to make a difference for all children in North Carolina.

This unique public-private initiative is designed to provide children with access to high quality and affordable child care, health care and family support services. Smart Start targets children 0 to 5 to ensure they come to school healthy and ready to succeed.

Smart Start was launched in 1993 by Gov. Jim Hunt and today, it is a model for the nation in early childhood education.

Research tells us the first years of life are the most important to future development and what we do during that critical window of opportunity will make a difference for a lifetime.

We know that children need to be loved, read to, talked

to and nurtured. Their parents need to be aware of the resources available to them. Since North Carolina has one of the highest percentages of working mothers in the country, child care is a reality for many families. Also, in North Carolina, more than 64 percent of preschool children live in homes where both parents are working. When working parents make decisions about the care their young children receive, all of their choices should be of the highest quality. Studies have shown that high quality child care does make a difference. And a study of Smart Start partnerships indicates that Smart Start has improved the overall quality of child care in the first counties which began services.

Smart Start is also enabling children to get better health outcomes by making immunizations and health services more



"A world-class workforce requires world-class skills, which in turn, requires children to come to school ready to learn. Children who come to school healthy and prepared to succeed will develop into better workers, sustaining North Carolina's economy in the years to come. But if children come to school ready to fail, even our best teachers can't help them become the skilled workers our state needs."

GOVERNOR JIM HUNT

**Smart
START**

accessible. In many counties, vision and hearing problems for young children have now been detected at an earlier age. Smart Start is also extending services to families that need transportation, and providing educational resources and information to help parents be successful.

Not Just Another Program ♦

Smart Start is NOT a single intervention such as a building or program where parents can choose to send their children for child care, nor is it "just another government program" from Raleigh or Washington.

Instead, it is a comprehensive public-private initiative where communities pool resources, develop a local plan to meet the needs of local communities, and provide services to children and families.

The strength of Smart Start's success relies on collaboration and local accountability. Local Smart Start partnerships have brought communities together in ways never imagined. Community leaders, child care providers, parents, teachers, religious leaders and the business community have joined together to map out plans that will meet needs specific to their communities. They know what works best for their children. And they know that by improving the opportunities for their youngest citizens, they are investing in their community's future.

Today, 70 percent of Smart Start funds for direct services is spent on improving the quality of child care, making child care more affordable and accessible. Programs and services for Smart Start are in more than half of the state's counties, while the remaining counties

are in the planning stage or providing limited services. It is the goal of the North Carolina Partnership for Children, the statewide nonprofit organization which provides oversight and technical assistance for local partnerships, to ensure that Smart Start programs and services are available for every child in every county.

Private Support ♦

Funding for Smart Start is made up of private donations and state dollars, allocated by the North Carolina General Assembly. Since 1993, the initiative has expanded each year. State allocations for Smart Start have gone from \$20 million in its first year, to almost \$92 million in the 1997-'98 fiscal year - meeting only a portion of the full need throughout the state. In '97-98, nearly \$11 million in cash and in-kind contributions were raised for Smart Start.

Smart Start is getting results and improving the quality of early childhood education and care. It continues to move ahead and for the first time, all 100 counties in North Carolina are receiving Smart Start funds for planning or programs and services.

The ultimate goal is to bring the state together, and have partnerships working in all 100 counties to assure future school success for young children.

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

Smart Start PARTNERSHIPS IN ACTION

Local partnerships are the key to Smart Start Success.

It's about collaboration, bringing together all parts of the community - families, churches, businesses, nonprofits, local government agencies and schools - to work together to improve the lives of their children. And, above all, local partnerships are getting results that are making a difference for North Carolina's children.

Here are just a few examples of how Smart Start has made a difference in local communities:

Focusing on teacher education ♦

Before Smart Start in Ashe County, only 5 percent of child care teachers and providers had child care credentials. In the spring of 1998, all child care teachers in the county will have completed the child care credential. Most of these classes are offered free of charge to teachers thanks to the T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps) grants and Smart Start.



Increasing quality, reducing teacher turnover the Child Care W.A.G.E.\$ program in Orange County has achieved what once seemed impossible - a reduction in the turnover rate of child care providers, an increase in quality child care and an affordable price for families. Under this project, teachers, directors, and family child care providers in regulated child care programs are eligible for salary supplements based on education and continuing in the same classroom for a certain period of time. In Orange County in 1997, 130 child care teachers, directors and family child care providers participated in the program.

Meeting local needs ♦

Statistics show that 33 percent of children entering kindergarten in Burke County are in need of serious dental treatment. The county has 67 percent fewer dentists per capita than the state average, with only 15 dentists in general practice. The Burke County Partnership for Children created a community task force to develop a compre-

Smart Start RESULTS

IN 43 SMART START COUNTIES:

- More than 50,000 children have received Smart Start child care subsidies so their parents can work.
- More than 33,500 spaces in child care and education programs have been created.
- More than 97,000 children have received early intervention and preventive health screenings.
- More than 100,000 children are in child care programs that have been improved through Smart Start grants.
- More than 60,000 parents have received parent and health education through a variety of Smart Start programs.

**Smart
START**

hensive dental health plan. As a result, a Children's Dental Health Services program opened a clinic, providing dental education for parents and training for professionals and child care workers. The program is now operated on a full-time basis in the Burke County Health Department. In less than two years, 3,247 parents in the county have participated in education activities and 402 young children have been treated in the clinic, thanks to Smart Start.

Improving the quality of child care ♦

In the far western portion of the state, Region A (made up of seven counties) has increased the number of child care centers receiving the state's top rating of AA, by 72 percent. The number of nationally accredited child care centers has increased by 275 percent - from four before Smart Start began to 11. Four dental clinics were established with the help of Smart Start to treat unserved young children. Eighty-five percent of children receiving subsidized child care are in high quality child care centers.

Family Resource Centers make impact ♦

In Wilkes County, agencies are coordinating their services at sites that are more accessible to families, and parents are better able to prepare their children to enter school. As a result: Support groups for parents have served more than 400 parents; family literacy has helped more than 800 children and families learn to read together since 1995; new Family Resource Centers are helping families and children through comprehensive services. Parents that have dropped out of school can get an adult high school diploma; free transportation and child care for their young children at three resource centers. Family Resource Centers have helped more than 900 participants in Wilkes County since 1995.

Breaking down barriers ♦

Before Smart Start, Spanish-speaking residents in Chatham County had few resources when they needed child care. There were no child care or health care-related services or materials distributed to Spanish-speaking families. Today, through Child Care Networks and the local Smart Start partnership, families can access a variety of training sessions and materials on basic child care, health and safety, and early childhood development. Resources have been pooled through the local partnership, the local Cooperative Extension agency, the local community college, Head Start, the United Way and the Helping Hands Center to make sure families have the best possible opportunities for their children.

Focusing on local needs ♦

In Anson County, teen pregnancy rate is at an all time high. In response, the TIPS (Teen Information and Parenting Services) project of the local partnership, also funded by Glaxo-Wellcome and Food Lion grants, provides services to more than 30 teen parents on a regular basis. Parenting sessions are provided including transportation and child care. A TIPS coordinator also makes monthly home visits to support the teen parents and assist them in getting the resources they need.

Building a brighter future ♦

Before Smart Start in Jones County, there was no pediatrician and only three child care centers. Today, a physician is available to provide services through the Health Department and there are now five child care centers with two others in the planning phase. Health services are now available that didn't exist before, thanks to Smart Start and a grant from Kate B. Reynolds.

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

Smart Start

RECOGNITION & RESEARCH

North Carolina has taken a bold step by initiating Smart Start.

In many cases, Smart Start has broken down barriers and built new communication lines for enhanced or new programs and services. It has allowed North Carolina to build an early childhood system that is considered a model for the rest of the nation.

Overall, Smart Start has passed many tests. It has been audited, evaluated and scrutinized like no other program and has also garnered an unprecedented amount of private sector support raising nearly \$30 million in cash and in-kind contributions since 1993. In 1997-'98, more than 135,000 volunteer hours were contributed to Smart Start programs and services.

Smart Start has made a significant impact since it was launched in 1993 by Gov. Jim Hunt and North Carolina is hailed as a leader for developing this early

childhood initiative.

- North Carolina is one of only eight states in the nation with a comprehensive, focused plan to promote the well-being of young children - because of Smart Start. - *Columbia University*
- President Clinton's proposal on child care cites Smart Start as a model for improving the quality, affordability and accessibility of child care, health care and family support. North Carolina's T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps) project, which has provided scholarships to more than 7,000 teachers, was also recognized.
- Research conducted by the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center, which is evaluating the Smart Start initiative, determined that Smart Start has increased the overall quality of child care in the 18 counties which first started providing programs and services.

Thanks to Smart Start, the number of top quality child care centers in the state has increased by more than 60 percent in Smart Start counties.

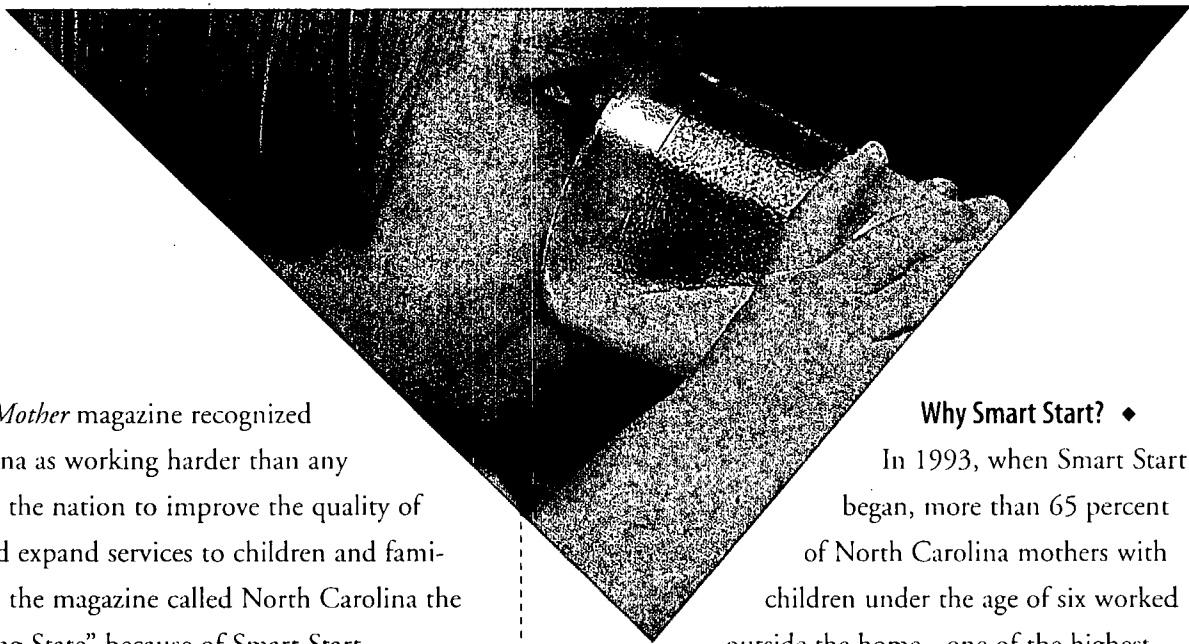


Early Intervention Makes Economic Sense

High quality early childhood education is the most cost-effective way to ensure future economic development and prosperity.

Every dollar spent now on early childhood education will save more than \$7 later in special education, welfare, prisons and crime.

Early childhood studies are well documented and far reaching providing that early childhood education works. The High/Scope Perry Preschool study and the Carolina Abecedarian Project are two highly revered examples.



- *Working Mother* magazine recognized North Carolina as working harder than any other state in the nation to improve the quality of child care and expand services to children and families. In 1995, the magazine called North Carolina the "Most Exciting State" because of Smart Start.
- *Time* magazine, *The Pittsburgh Gazette*, *The New York Times*, *The Atlanta Constitution*, *Appalachia*, *Education Week* and other newspapers across the country have recognized Smart Start and North Carolina as a model for early childhood initiatives.
- Through Smart Start, Wilkes Community College was selected among 12 other programs to receive a national award, the Secretary's Award for Outstanding Adult Education and Literacy.
- In 1996, a Performance Audit, conducted by Coopers & Lybrand, was conducted at the request of the N.C. General Assembly. The audit called for Smart Start's continuation and expansion. It called Smart Start a "credible program that delivers substantial good to children and families in the state of North Carolina."

The North Carolina Partnership for Children, the nonprofit organization which provides the oversight and technical assistance to local partnerships, is committed to ensuring the success and accountability for Smart Start programs and services.

Why Smart Start? ♦

In 1993, when Smart Start began, more than 65 percent of North Carolina mothers with children under the age of six worked outside the home - one of the highest percentages of working mothers in the United States. That number is currently near 70 percent.

Today, the latest research confirms what many have known for a long time, that the early years are the most critical for development and future success. What happens during those first few years helps to determine brain structure, shaping the way people learn, think, and behave for the rest of their lives.

It has been determined that 85 percent of a child's intellect, personality, and social skills are formed by age five. If we don't give young children what they need in the very early years, we cannot make it up to them later.

This research confirms that children's early attachments have a vital influence on their brain development, and that everyone who cares for young children — parents, family, friends, teachers, child care providers — can make a difference. (*I Am Your Child*)

High quality early childhood education is the most cost-effective way to ensure future economic development and prosperity.

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

PROGRAMS & SERVICES

In each local partnership, planning teams make decisions about the kinds of programs that are developed using Smart Start funding.

Smart Start partnerships have implemented programs in three areas to prepare children for school: Child Care and Education, Health Care and Education, and Family Support Services.

CHILD CARE AND EDUCATION

One of the goals of all local Smart Start partnerships is to make high-quality child care and education available for all children who need it. Research shows that high quality child care and family services is a very effective way to help children get the right start. Approximately 70% of Smart Start funds are used to make child care and education better, available to more children and affordable for more families.

Paying Subsidies for Child Care ♦

Approximately 30 percent of Smart Start funds are used to assist families in

purchasing the child care they choose. Subsidies may be paid for care in any licensed child care center and registered family child care home. In order to support the cost of higher quality child care, some local partnerships subsidize the care at a rate that is higher than the county market rate. Most partnerships have also raised the eligibility limit for subsidies to help more working poor families.

Increasing the Availability of Child Care ♦

Many communities do not have adequate child care and are adding additional spaces through a grants program. Sometimes more spaces are added for particular age groups, such as infants and toddlers, or for families who work extended hours.

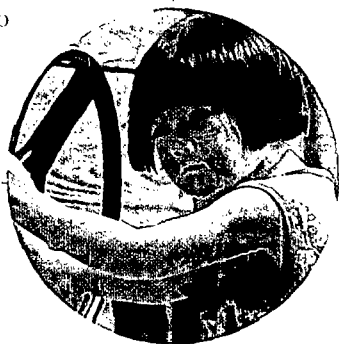
Improving the Quality of Child Care ♦

A major focus of Smart Start is improving the quality of all child care. Since there is a direct link between teacher education and good outcomes for children, Smart Start focuses on assisting teachers in furthering their education. The T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship Program makes scholarships available to all child care teachers and directors in North Carolina. Through T.E.A.C.H. and other

Smart Start is:

- ♦ improving the quality of child care
- ♦ making child care more affordable and accessible
- ♦ providing health services for young children
- ♦ connecting parents with education and resources

Because all children deserve the chance to enter school as prepared as possible, we have the responsibility to help our children succeed in every way.



local partnership strategies, education is linked to better compensation, and the turnover rate in child care is greatly reduced.

Child care program standards are improved through environmental assessments and other projects that support an improved licensing standard or national accreditation. Grants are given to child care programs to improve their learning materials or to create safer playgrounds.

Inclusion of Children with Special Needs ♦

Educating teachers and giving technical assistance in working effectively with children with disabilities is encouraged through Smart Start. One project purchases special equipment to enable children with disabilities to function more easily in classrooms of typically developing children.



HEALTH CARE AND EDUCATION

In order for a child to enter school prepared for success, the child must be healthy. The Smart Start goal is for all young children to have comprehensive, health, mental health, and dental services. In addition child care environments should be safe and healthy for all children in care.

Support for Immunizations ♦

One of the challenges of getting young children properly immunized is making immunizations accessible. Through Smart Start, communities set up satellite sites in rural areas and provide immunizations in locations convenient to parents. Outreach nurses care for children's health needs in child care programs and follow up with their families to be sure that immunizations are received on time.

Health and Developmental Screenings ♦

Some local plans include health and developmental screenings in child care programs. Besides the health benefits and convenience for working families, children are more comfortable in these settings. Correcting problems early, gives children a better chance of future school success.

Education for Parents and Child Care Providers ♦

Health education is available to parents and child care providers. Topics include First Aid and CPR, nutrition, and protection from infectious disease. Special programs are available to parents of newborns, including teen parents, to help them care for their newborns and learn about child development.

FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

Smart Start programs provide families with information, education, and other services to help their children be prepared for success in school.

Child Care Resource & Referral Services ♦

Child care resource and referral services are a critical part of each Smart Start community. These programs offer a broad range of services and technical assistance to families, child care providers, and businesses. For example, families can talk to a counselor at their local child care resource and referral agency, learn about high quality care and find out where it is available.

Family Resource Centers ♦

Many local partnerships have discovered that the most effective way to serve families is to provide needed services in family resource centers located within targeted communities. These centers range in size and services offered. In one rural community, a resource van visits isolated areas on a regular basis, taking enrichment programs and health services to children and families.

Family Literacy Programs ♦

Children who grow up in families that are literate are more likely to be good readers. Through Smart Start, family literacy programs are helping family members learn to read to their young children.

Transportation ♦

Because many of North Carolina's children live in very rural areas, transportation is a barrier to getting the services they need. Smart Start partnerships are finding ways to make transportation available to children and their families.

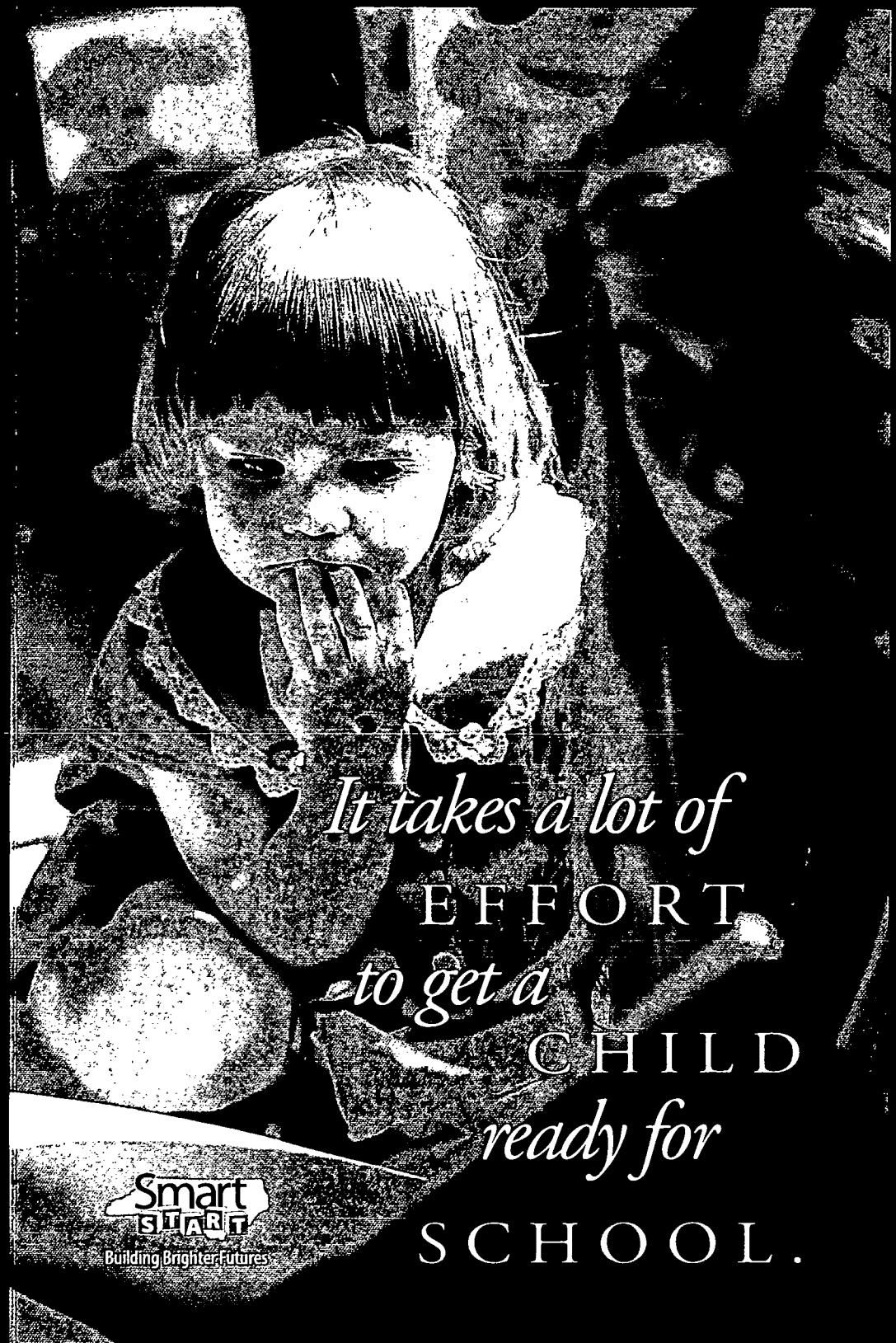


For more information about Smart Start,
contact the North Carolina Partnership
for Children at (919) 821-7999 or visit
<http://www.smartstart-nc.org>

N.C. Partnership for Children
1100 Wake Forest Rd., Suite 300
Raleigh, NC 27604



Building Brighter Futures



It takes a lot of
EFFORT
to get a
CHILD
ready for
SCHOOL.



Building Brighter Futures

In today's world,
children need to
be as prepared as
possible when
they enter school.

They should be healthy and motivated, because children who start off on the right foot have a better chance of leading productive lives.

Smart Start is a comprehensive public-private initiative designed to help all children and all parents get access to

good, affordable child care, health care and family support services.

Most of all, Smart Start is working and making a difference for young children and their families. Thanks to Smart Start, more North Carolina children than ever are getting the early childhood education, health care and family support they need to come to school prepared to succeed.

WITH SMART START

- ◆ working families have access to quality child care that is affordable
- ◆ children are getting preventive health care
- ◆ transportation is provided to child care and health services in remote areas
- ◆ parents are getting education and information to support strong families

Smart Start, launched in 1993 by Gov. Jim Hunt, is unique to North Carolina and unique in the way it works. It's the only initiative of its kind and is considered a national model for early childhood systems.

It involves both state and private funding and is administered by local partnerships - by people who best know what children and families in their communities need. These local partnerships bring together parents, educators, child care providers, nonprofits, faith communities, and business people to help build brighter futures for children and families in North Carolina.

Studies show that more than 85 percent of a child's

intellect, personality and social skills are formed by age five. Smart Start is already making a difference in the lives of thousands of North Carolina children during these most critical years of development.



ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND RECOGNITION

◆ In 43 Smart Start counties, more than **100,000** children are in child care programs that have been improved through Smart Start grants. More than **50,000** children have received Smart Start child care subsidies so their parents can work. More than **33,500** spaces in child care and education programs have been created. More than **97,000** children have received early intervention and preventive health screenings.

◆ A study from Columbia University cited North Carolina as one of only eight states in the nation with a comprehensive, focused plan to promote the well-being of young children - because of Smart Start.

◆ Research conducted by the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center determined that Smart Start has increased the overall quality of child care in the 18 counties which first started providing programs and services.

◆ Since almost 70 percent of mothers in North Carolina work outside the home, quality child care is important. Thanks to Smart Start, the number of top quality child care centers in the state has increased by more than 60 percent in Smart Start counties.

◆ The President's proposal on child care cites Smart Start as a model for improving the quality, affordability and accessibility of child care, health care and family support. North Carolina's T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps) project which has provided scholarships to more than **7,000** teachers, was also recognized.



◆ Some of the top corporations in the state have given their largest donations to date to Smart Start, contributing more than **\$30** million in cash since the program began.

◆ Business, church and community leaders are volunteering thousands of hours on behalf of Smart Start, helping children and families in their communities. This year more than **135,000** volunteer hours were given to Smart Start programs and services.

Smart Start places an emphasis on accountability, with strict oversight and measures to ensure the fiscal integrity of programs and services.

**Smart
START**

Working together, we can
build a brighter future for
our children and for the
state of North Carolina.



SMART START WORKS

Smart Start is helping children and families across North Carolina -- including middle-class families -- get good, affordable child care, health care and family support.

With more working mothers than almost any other state, North Carolina needs good child care. In the 55 counties where it's up & running, Smart Start has dramatically increased the number of quality child care centers; created thousands of child care spaces; helped thousands of children get health and vision screening; trained child care teachers; and helped moms and dads get parent education.

But Smart Start is not serving children and parents in North Carolina's 45 other counties. Smart Start needs to be working in all counties -- so all children and families can benefit from Smart Start.

Studies and Research Show Smart Start is Working

Smart Start has been recognized as a national model among early childhood professionals for its comprehensive and unique approach to ensure children enter school healthy and ready to learn.

- ◆ Research by the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center at UNC-Chapel Hill shows that Smart Start has significantly increased the overall quality of child care.
- ◆ A 1996 comprehensive Coopers & Lybrand performance audit initiated by the General Assembly called Smart Start "a credible program that delivers substantial good to children and families in North Carolina."
- ◆ North Carolina is one of just eight states in the nation with a comprehensive, focused plan to promote the well-being of children, according to Columbia University's National Center for Children in Poverty.
- ◆ The number of top quality child care centers in the state has risen by more than 60 percent in Smart Start counties, according to state data.
- ◆ President Clinton's proposed child care initiative calls Smart Start a model for improving the quality, affordability and accessibility of child care, health care and family support.

Smart Start Is Accountable

The North Carolina Partnership for Children is enforcing tough standards to ensure Smart Start's fiscal integrity and accountability.

- ◆ Smart Start partnerships are subject to annual audits by the Office of the State Auditor and must use a uniform chart of accounts and a standard accounting software system.
- ◆ Bonding is required for board members and executive directors of local partnerships, as well as other employees who receive or handle Smart Start funds. Smart Start partnerships must also use independent payroll services.
- ◆ New partnerships and partnerships with unsatisfactory financial performance must handle their finances through a centralized accounting and contract management system.

Businesses and Non-Profits Support Smart Start

Since 1993, nearly \$30 million in cash and in-kind contributions has been donated to Smart Start. Businesses and non-profits have provided playground equipment, books for children, and thousands of hours of volunteer support.

- ◆ Wachovia, NationsBank, First Union and Food Lion have pledged \$7 million to Smart Start. Glaxo Wellcome has contributed \$1 million to support maternal and child health projects, and CP&L and Duke Power have each pledged \$1 million to help local partnerships provide services to children and families.
- ◆ AT&T has pledged \$1 million to boost accountability and to support parent education -- including a new toll-free number (1-877-4A-CHILD) for parents across the state who need advice from childhood experts and other family support.
- ◆ The Lakewood Preschool in Charlotte turned a \$72,000 Smart Start grant into nearly \$700,000 worth of services to help children in its community. Lakewood is tuition-free, and operating funds are provided through donations from individuals, churches, foundations and businesses. The Charlotte-Mecklenburg schools donated the land for the project, and Charlotte's Habitat for Humanity built the preschool -- making it the first non-residential Habitat project in the country -- with donations of building materials, services and volunteer labor.
- ◆ Nearly 135,000 hours of volunteer time were donated to Smart Start in all North Carolina counties in 1997. This year, First Union is giving all of its employees in North Carolina four hours per month to volunteer in local Smart Start-supported centers, as part of the company's "Read Aloud Partners" program. After they volunteer, the employees donate the books they read to the Smart Start centers. Through "Read Aloud Partners," First Union employees so far have donated more than 1,300 hours to reading to students and donated more than 1,000 books to classrooms.



Smart Start -- For All Children

Smart Start is helping children and families -- including middle-class families -- across North Carolina get good, affordable child care, health care and family support.

North Carolina has more working mothers than almost any other state, so good child care is a critical need. Smart Start is helping working families get better child care, more child care spaces, better child care teachers, health and vision screenings and parent education.

Statewide, Smart Start has helped:

- more than 100,000 children get higher-quality child care;
- more than 26,000 child care teachers get education and training;
- more than 97,000 children get preventive health care; and
- more than 60,000 moms and dads get parenting and health education.

But it's not working for every child. Smart Start is up and running in 55 counties, but not at full speed. In the remaining 45 counties, planning is underway, but children and parents aren't yet getting direct Smart Start services. Gov. Hunt wants Smart Start fully funded in all 100 counties so every child and every parent can benefit.

Here's how Smart Start is working for children and parents throughout North Carolina:

Better Quality Care

- Research by UNC's Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center shows that Smart Start is increasing the overall quality of child care. In addition, the number of top quality child care centers has increased by more than 60 percent in Smart Start counties.
- In **Burke County** the number of AA-licensed centers -- the highest rating from the state -- has increased 500% since Smart Start began there in 1994. Every day, more than 650 children are receiving top-quality care in Burke County.
- Smart Start sponsors storytelling by librarians at every child care center and home in **Lenoir and Greene counties** twice a month. **Avery County** has developed a weekly music program for every child enrolled in a child care center and home in that county.

More Child Care Spaces

- Since Smart Start began, more than 35,000 spaces in child care and education programs have been created. For example, in **Cumberland County**, more than 3,500 new child care spaces are available for children in licensed family child care homes and centers, Head Start and other early intervention programs.
- Through Smart Start subsidies, a working family of four earning an average of \$30,000 a year can get help for child care. Since Smart Start began, more than 50,000 children across North Carolina have received these subsidies, providing them with higher-quality child care.

Better Teachers

- More than 7,000 child care teachers have improved their education and training through T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps) scholarships. The turnover rate among T.E.A.C.H. participants earning their associates' degrees has fallen to 10 percent annually -- compared to 42 percent statewide.
- Only 5 percent of child care teachers and providers in **Ashe County** had earned their North Carolina child care credentials before Smart Start began. This spring -- thanks to Smart Start and T.E.A.C.H. grants -- every child care teacher and provider in the county will complete this advanced training and earn the North Carolina child care credential.

More Health and Vision Screenings

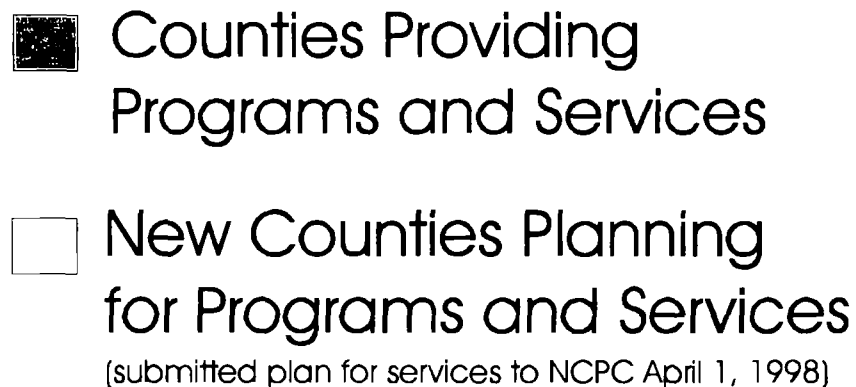
- Before Smart Start began in **Jones County**, the county had no pediatrician. Today, children are served by a physician through the Health Department, and all pre-kindergarten children in the county have had their hearing screened thanks to Smart Start-purchased equipment.
- In **Cleveland County**, 1,047 children had not gotten their childhood shots before Smart Start began. In only one year, Smart Start's "Improve Health Care" reduced that number to 63.

Help for Parents

As part of its \$1 million donation to Smart Start, AT&T will provide a toll-free telephone number for parents to talk with childhood experts and find out about family resources and services in their local communities. And every county will get a resource guide for parents as a "ready reference" on local services and parenting tips and information.

The **Iredell County** Partnership for Children and local dentists have created a video to teach parents the proper way to care for their children's teeth to prevent future problems. New parents will receive the video in the hospital and will also be distributed in child care centers and family resource centers.

In **Forsyth and Davidson counties**, Smart Start means home visits and health checks are available to every newborn baby and his or her parents. In Forsyth County, the parents of every child born in the county receive parenting education materials before they leave the hospital.





Private Sector Support

Businesses, Foundations Committed to Smart Start

Major Private Sector Contributors to Smart Start

\$2 Million

First Union
NationsBank
Wachovia

\$1 Million +

AT&T
BB&T
CP&L
Duke Power
Food Lion
Glaxo Wellcome
IBM

\$500,000+

Carnegie Corporation of New York
Guilford Mills

\$200,000+

Centura Bank
A.J. Fletcher Foundation
R.J. Reynolds
Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation
Sara Lee

\$100,000+

Blumenthal Foundation
Broyhill Foundation

\$50,000+

Bell South
Hurley Foundation
Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation
Nortel
Shelton Foundation
Weaver Foundation

\$40,000+

Sprint
Burlington Industries

\$20,000+

Junior League of Raleigh
Schindler Companies, Ltd.
Sea Land Service

\$10,000+

Capital Consortium
Integon Corporation
Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust

Private Sector support makes impact on Smart Start programs and services

AT&T has pledged \$1 million to support increased awareness and accountability for Smart Start in local communities.

Glaxo Wellcome has given \$1 million to support maternal and child health projects across North Carolina.

Guilford Mills is supporting quality child care initiatives across the state with a \$500,000 gift, of which the first \$100,000 will support Guilford County children.

The Blumenthal Foundation has pledged \$100,000 to make sure Smart Start is reaching children in every county in North Carolina.

Sprint is working with the Cumberland County Partnership for Children to alleviate the problem of child abuse. Through a grant of nearly \$50,000, Smart Start and Sprint have combined to make life safer for the children of Cumberland County.

Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust has pledged \$60,000 for a children's health project in Jones County as well as supporting several Smart Start projects in Winston-Salem.

BB&T has pledged \$1 million to increase the quality of child care in Wilson and Robeson Counties.

Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation was the first foundation to support Smart Start and has already committed nearly \$300,000 to Smart Start statewide. The foundation has helped establish a strong base for the North Carolina Partnership for Children.

Duke Power has pledged \$1 million to Smart Start of which \$200,000 has already been donated to family support projects in 14 counties in North Carolina.

Mary Reynolds Babcock has provided more than \$100,000 in grants to local Smart Start partnerships to assist in strengthening the collaboration process in those communities.

Wachovia, Nationsbank, First Union, and Food Lion have pledged a total of \$7 million to Smart Start. To date, they have already donated more than \$1.6 million directly to Smart Start projects in 45 counties across the state.

The A.J. Fletcher Foundation, like Z. Smith, was one of the first foundations to support the vision of Smart Start. The foundation has contributed nearly \$300,000 to date and was instrumental in establishing early private sector support for Smart Start.

Bell South has strengthened the quality of child care in Brunswick County through a donation there of \$75,000.

CP&L has pledged \$1 million to Smart Start. In the first year alone, the company donated a building to the Johnston County Smart Start efforts and an additional \$200,000 in support of counties which have just begun to develop Smart Start in their regions.

R.J. Reynolds has already given \$100,000 to strengthen the quality of child care in Forsyth, Bertie, Stokes, Surry and Davidson Counties.

Clinton Presidential Records Digital Records Marker

This is not a presidential record. This is used as an administrative marker by the William J. Clinton Presidential Library Staff.

This marker identifies the place of a publication.

Publications have not been scanned in their entirety for the purpose of digitization. To see the full publication please search online or visit the Clinton Presidential Library's Research Room.



Why Support Smart Start?

**A REPORT FROM WACHOVIA
AND
NORTH CAROLINA EDUCATORS**

MAY 1998

WACHOVIA

Most frequently asked questions about Smart Start

• What is Smart Start?

Smart Start is a public-private early childhood initiative to help all North Carolina children enter school healthy and ready to succeed. Its unique, comprehensive approach allows communities to make decisions and plans that are specific to the needs of their young children and families. Smart Start services are targeted for children 0-5 and their families and include making sure child care is of high quality and affordable and accessible to those who need it as well as health services and screenings and resources for family support.

• Is Smart Start the same as Head Start?

Smart Start and Head Start are different even though they share similar goals. Head Start is a program that targets a particular population of at-risk children. It is based on a very specific program model and federal funding. Smart Start is funded by state and private funds and, although the program targets children with need, it improves services for all children under kindergarten age. The specific goal of Smart Start is to assist young children to enter school healthy and prepared for success. Typically Smart Start funds are spent on a variety of different programs.

• Is Smart Start just for poor children?

No. Smart Start is making an impact on North Carolina's early childhood system which offers opportunities for all children to benefit. Many projects that are funded by Smart Start are directed toward children who don't have access to high quality services such as child care. When services are improved for these children, they are improved for all children in care. Families also have access to more resources through Smart Start.

• How many children have been reached?

Potentially all children in a county may be impacted by Smart Start. Children may receive multiple services from a variety of programs funded by Smart Start, such as subsidized child care, developmental screenings, an enrichment program at the local library, and their parents may receive parent education. Because of these multiple services, it is difficult to know an exact unduplicated total number of children served. It is possible to determine a total number of children served in a particular program.

• How is Smart Start different from other state-funded programs?

Smart Start provides an opportunity for local citizens to make decisions about services needed for their young children, based on each county's particular circumstances, need and resources. In addition, Smart Start allows citizens to hold local

agencies accountable for the services they are already providing and affords the opportunity to those who are most familiar with local needs to fill in the gaps in services.

• Is Smart Start an invasion on the family and family values?

Smart Start supports family values in every way. In addition, a parents' right to make decisions about their children is an integral part of Smart Start policies. Parents are valued as decision makers in determining policy. It is a requirement that parents of children receiving subsidies serve on local Smart Start boards.

• How are private contributions used?

Approximately 95 percent of all funds contributed to Smart Start by the private sector are directed to local programs in North Carolina. In fiscal year 1997, the N.C. Partnership for children distributed more than \$2.6 million to programs in 47 Smart Start-funded counties and nearly \$600,000 to an additional 37 non-Smart Start counties for expansion efforts.

• How is Smart Start being evaluated?

The overall goal of Smart Start, school readiness, is being measured by the University of North Carolina's Frank Porter Graham Research Center. In addition, each individual project that is funded by Smart Start is being evaluated to be sure it is getting results that will impact school readiness.

• What is the total amount of Smart Start funds currently being spent on child care subsidies?

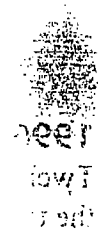
Currently, 42 percent (more than \$23 million) of all Smart Start direct service allocations is being spent on child care subsidies. Local partnerships are spending from 30-76% of their direct services on subsidies.

• What is the percentage and amount of Smart Start funds that are currently being spent on child care related services?

The total amount of Smart Start direct service funds currently being spent on child care and child care-related activities is 72% (\$40 million). In addition to direct child care subsidies, Smart Start funds are being spent on child care and education and teacher education and support.

• How does Smart Start relate to welfare reform?

Without child care, welfare families cannot work. As North Carolina continues to reduce its welfare rolls, the need for child care will increase.



SMART START: THEN AND NOW

North Carolina's early childhood initiative, Smart Start, was launched by Governor Jim Hunt in 1993 because of a vision to ensure that children enter school healthy and prepared for school success. To determine the best way to do this, Gov. Hunt organized a task force around early childhood issues, and out of those discussions, Smart Start was created and the authorizing legislation was passed in the same year (July, 1993). This public-private initiative became a new way of doing business for early childhood education. It offers a comprehensive approach, not a single intervention, which meets local needs. Communities are rallying around the needs of their children and designing a plan to meet those needs.

GETTING ORGANIZED – THE FIRST YEAR

In that first year, the North Carolina Department of Human Resources was chosen to administer Smart Start. As a result, it created the Division of Child Development, to oversee Smart Start. In addition to Smart Start, the responsibilities for child care regulations, child care subsidies, and the administration of federal grants to improve child care, were moved from the Division of Facility Services to the Division of Child Development. Dick Clifford, an early childhood researcher, from the University of North Carolina was the first director of the Division of Child Development and Stephanie Fanjul, a child care expert, was the assistant director. In 1995, Dick Clifford returned to his work at the University of North Carolina and Stephanie Fanjul became director.

Since Smart Start was created as a locally-driven early childhood initiative, the charge given to communities was to come together and plan to meet the needs of young children and their families. Planning boards were empowered to think broadly and were given a lot of flexibility in making decisions about the services they would provide.

PARTNERSHIP SELECTIONS – A TIMELINE

1993: In July 1993 a request for application for Smart Start funding was sent to county commissioners and Interagency Coordinating Council chairs in all 100 counties. All but 6 counties responded during that first application period. Twelve pioneer partnerships (year 1), including 18 counties, were selected in the first year, representing a cross section of needs and resources, diverse geographical locations, and all congressional districts.

1994: In Smart Start's second year, during July 1994, funding was approved by the General Assembly for 12 additional partnerships (year 2). A request for application was sent out in August and applications were received from 76 of the 82 potential counties. On September 21, 12 additional partnerships were named, covering 14 counties.

1995: Twelve additional partnerships (year 3), representing 12 counties were selected in August 1995. One of these partnerships declined the funding, leaving 11 new partnerships. At that time a total of 43 counties were receiving Smart Start funds.

1996: In 1996 another request for application was sent to all remaining unfunded counties. Twelve additional partnerships were selected representing 12 counties (year 4). This brought the total of funded counties to 55.

1997: In 1997 Governor Hunt announced that he would request planning funds for the remaining 45 unfunded counties. Planning funds were approved and for the first time, every county received Smart Start funding.

1998: For the first time, all 100 counties submitted plans to implement programs and services to the N.C. Partnership on April 1. During the 1998 short session, Governor Hunt is asking the General Assembly for an additional \$57 million in expansion funds so that every county will have funds for direct services and programs.

COLLABORATION AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

In the first and second years of Smart Start, 1993-94 and 1994-95, the pioneer partnerships participated in intensive training on collaboration and strategic planning which was directed from the state level and paid for with a special Smart Start legislative appropriation. County teams of representatives came together for three-day periods, four times during their initial planning year. These teams were challenged to dream and envision a better future for the children in their counties and to plan services to make those dreams come true. As these participants spent uninterrupted time together, they learned to share information and resources, and come to consensus around the needs of young children in their counties. Since the knowledge and experience of the required partnership team members were very broad, the strategic plans developed by those teams reflected a wide scope of services. When strategic plans were submitted by local partnerships and reviewed by the Division of Child Development/DHR, a wide range of activities was approved.

It was never envisioned by the original Smart Start planners that Smart Start would fund the broad scope of activities that were developed by local partnerships in the first two years of operation. Many legislators, state-level administrators and local partnership board members became concerned that in targeting funds to so many different kinds of activities, the impact on child care and early education was being watered down and the overall goal of school readiness would not ultimately be achieved.

AN EVALUATION PLAN FOR SMART START

As part of the original design of Smart Start, an evaluation plan was determined to be critical to understanding the long term benefits of the initiative. The evaluation plan was developed and is being conducted by the University of North Carolina's Frank Porter Graham Center. This evaluation is driven by the theories of change that underlie Smart Start. The nature of Smart Start, including the multiple services that are offered to children through the initiative, and the varying developmental needs of young children, makes it difficult to get instant results in terms of evaluation. The evaluation project looks at Smart Start services such as quality child care efforts, family and health services, and measures short term and long term change.

After one year of Smart Start implementation, legislators began calling for Smart Start results. Although there had been initial concern from legislators and the public about tracking individual

children and agreement not to do so, the questions about results persisted and became a point of struggle among legislators and state policy makers.

The Division of Child Development created a data collection system in order to track the numbers of children being served by the wide array of Smart Start programs and services. This tracking of numbers was a short-term measure to respond to funders and the general public about the scope and impact of the program and was never meant to be an evaluative measure of the success of individual components of programs which takes more time to measure.

PERFORMANCE AUDIT CALLS FOR EXPANSION, BRINGS CHANGES

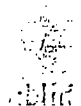
Because it was too early to prove children were better prepared for school as a result of Smart Start and because of concerns about the accountability of the initiative, in 1995 the General Assembly called for a performance audit of Smart Start. The accounting firm of Coopers & Lybrand was awarded a \$500,000 contract and closely studied the program at both the state and local partnership levels. The overall recommendation from the performance audit was that it was a credible program and should continue. However, the report called for significant changes and adjustments to the program, particularly in the area of fiscal accountability.

There were many changes to Smart Start as a result of the required implementation of recommendations from the Coopers' report. The most dramatic change was moving the administrative functions from the Department of Human Resources/Division of Child Development to the North Carolina Partnership for Children, beginning with the 1996-97 fiscal year. Prior to this change, the North Carolina Partnership had served in a support role to local partnerships. The transition of responsibilities was further complicated by the change in executive directors at the North Carolina Partnership for Children. David Walker became executive director in January 1996. Over the next year and a half, the North Carolina Partnership hired personnel to respond to its new responsibilities that were mandated by the General Assembly, including serving as the program fiscal agent, contracts management, compliance monitoring, providing technical assistance to local partnerships, and meeting the cash fundraising requirement.

SHARPENING THE FOCUS

The second legislative change that significantly impacted the program was implemented in July 1996. Thirty percent of all Smart Start service funds were mandated to be spent on child care subsidies. This mandate reduced the amount of funding that local partnerships had authority to control but brought the focus closer to the original intent of the initiative, providing subsidies for direct services to young children.

There was concern that because Smart Start funding was being spread among so many different kinds of activities, the impact of particular components could not adequately be measured and the overall impact on school readiness would not be obtained. It was never envisioned that Smart Start funding would be the only funding brought to bear on community problems related to young children. From the beginning, Smart Start was intended to pay for services directly linked to young children and their readiness for school and other funding could then be used to fund programs and services that indirectly impact young children. Communities have varied in their ability to make this happen.



CORE SERVICES DEVELOPED, IMPLEMENTED

In response to these concerns and through review of good practices of local partnerships already in operation, the Strategic Planning Committee of the North Carolina Partnership for Children developed Smart Start core services in January 1997. The purpose of these core services is to guide local partnerships in developing and implementing services that have a direct impact on school readiness, based on sound research. Smart Start plans for 1997-98 were required, for the first time, to have measurable outcomes for each activity that will be conducted using Smart Start funds.

PRIVATE SECTOR SUPPORT

Another legislative requirement is that Smart Start must raise \$1 in cash and in-kind contributions for every \$10 in state funding the program receives. Each year, partnerships have met this challenge, raising nearly \$30 million since the program began. Since the initiative is audited by the state, certain contributions are not counted nor are volunteer hours counted to meet this match. In 1997, the General Assembly broadened its definition of in-kind contributions, allowing donations that are given directly to a locally funded Smart Start project to count. In 1997-'98, partnerships raised nearly \$11 million in cash and in-kind contributions while there were more than 135,000 volunteer hours contributed.

Smart Start has garnered more private support toward early childhood issues than any other issue in the state. Some of the state's top corporations and banks have given their largest single contribution to Smart Start. These funds are making a direct impact on local programs and services as 95 percent of private funds are directed to local initiatives.

SMART START RESULTS AND RECOGNITION

Today, Smart Start is considered a model early childhood initiative. Results from Frank Porter Graham's child care study, indicate that Smart Start has improved the quality of child care in the first counties where Smart Start began. In 43 counties providing services: more than 100,000 children are getting higher-quality child care; more than 26,000 child care teachers get education and training; more than 97,000 children get preventive health care; and more than 60,000 parents are getting the education and support they need.

Smart Start has evolved quite dramatically over its first few years. Mandated legislative changes have imposed certain restrictions that have limited the scope of the program. However, the original concept of Smart Start, communities coming together to improve the lives of young children and their families has not been lost. Local partnerships are working harder than ever to keep their vision and mission alive within the context of the new realities.

Smart Start is tremendously successful as demonstrated by the improved outcomes for children and families in Smart Start communities. It will continue to be successful as local communities bring more and more energy and resources to meet the needs of young children. The critical nature of a child's early years makes it imperative that we move quickly because children can't wait! We know Smart Start is working and getting results. We have a responsibility to ensure that every child has access to programs and services. Their future depends on us.

Karen W. Ponder
NCPC/1998

Brain Facts, from page 1

Infants need to interact directly with others. Children need to hear people talk to them about what they are seeing and experiencing, in order for their brains to fully develop language skills.

- **THE LOVING TOUCH** Warm, responsive caregiving not only meets an infant's basic, day-to-day needs for nourishment and warmth, but also responds to their preferences, moods and rhythms. Recent research suggests that this kind of consistent caregiving is not only comforting for an infant, it plays a vital role in healthy development. The way that parents, families and other caregivers relate and respond to their young children, and the way they respond to their children's contact with the environment, directly affect the formation of the brain's neural pathways.

- **CREATING ONE STABLE BOND** Researchers who examine the life histories of children who have succeeded despite many challenges, have consistently found that these children have had at least one stable, supportive relationship with an adult early in life.

Next Steps: What can you do?

- ◆ Incorporate this research into your Smart Start plan and activities. Use this information as criteria for establishing new programs.

- ◆ Build your own personal "brain" capacity - research and learn as much as you can so you can become the official "expert on brain development" in your community.

- ◆ Bring parents, churches, pediatricians, business and county leaders to the table to discuss the importance and implications of this research.

- ◆ Talk about this critical information with everyone you see-- from your county's top business leaders to the person behind you in the grocery store check-out line.

- ◆ Arrange speaking engagements with civic groups, parenting classes, county meetings and churches to share these brain facts.

For more information about the SmartStart Times, the bi-weekly newsletter of the N.C. Partnership for Children, contact the communications department at 919-821-7999 or by e-mail at times@smartstart-nc.org.



North Carolina Partnership for Children
1100 Wake Forest Road, Suite 300
Raleigh, NC 27604

Phone 919-821-7999

Fax 919-821-8050

E-Mail times@smartstart-nc.org

Web Site www.smartstart-nc.org

Editor
Geelea Seaford

This SmartStartTimes is a biweekly publication of the N.C. Partnership for Children. Information for this report was obtained from the Families & Work Institute, An Ounce of Prevention Fund, Dr. Dorothy Routh of Florida State University, and the national I Am Your Child campaign.

SmartStartTimes

Volume 1, Number 8

November, 1997

SPECIAL REPORT: EARLY CHILDHOOD BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

This special report is intended to explain, in general, understandable terms, what the early childhood brain research means for children and families, and what is being done in North Carolina to promote this research. The intent is not to tell you everything there is to know about brain research. This special report is to get you thinking about how you can use this information in your community to spread awareness about the importance of a child's first years.

Brain Facts: Understanding the latest research

From President Clinton's White House Conference on Child Care to Gov. Hunt's Conference on Brain Development to Rob Reiner's support of the *I Am Your Child* Campaign, the entire country is talking about the latest in early childhood brain development.

New technology allows the thorough study of the brain, like we've never seen before. These studies prove that a child's early development is determined by his daily environment and experiences, rather than genetics alone. Researchers now believe it is the plasticity of the brain, its ability to develop and change in response to the demands of the environment, that enables a child to learn to use computers, solve mathematical problems and learn foreign languages.

In order to fully understand this information, we must first understand how a child's brain works and develops.

Brain Facts

- **MAKING CONNECTIONS** A child is born with over 100 billion neurons or brain cells. That's enough neurons to last a lifetime, since no more neurons will develop after birth. These neurons form connections, called synapses, which make up the wiring of the brain. (Don't worry, these terms are defined on page three!)

- **EARLY EXPERIENCES** At age eight months an infant may have 1,000 trillion synapses. However, by age 10 the number of synapses decrease to about 500 trillion. The final number of synapses is largely determined by a child's early experiences, which can increase or decrease the number of synapses by as much as 25 percent.

- **"USE IT OR LOSE IT!"** The brain operates on a "use it or lose it" principle: only those connections and pathways that are frequently activated are retained. Other connections that are not consistently used will be pruned or discarded so the active connections can become stronger.

- **DEFINING LANGUAGE SKILLS** When an infant is three months old, his brain can distinguish several hundred different spoken sounds. Over the next several months, his brain will organize itself more efficiently so that it only recognizes those sounds that are part of the language he regularly hears. During early childhood, the brain retains the ability to relearn sounds it has discarded, so young children typically learn new languages easily and without an accent.

- **THE POWER OF THE SPOKEN WORD** The power of early adult-child interactions is remarkable. Researchers found that when mothers frequently spoke to their infants, their children learned almost 300 more words by age two than did their peers whose mothers rarely spoke to them. However, mere exposure to language through television or adult conversation provided little benefit.

See Brain Facts, page 4

What does this brain research mean?

The implications of this research are far reaching. It should be used to educate parents and caregivers about the critical window of opportunity in a child's life that can ensure a child's healthy development.

Parents play the most important role in providing the nurturing and stimulation that children require, but many parents need information and support to develop good parenting skills. There is much that communities can also do to help families promote their child's healthy brain development, through programs like *Parents As Teachers*.

PARENT EDUCATION Parents must be educated about the importance of proper early experiences. The little things that parents do, like talking to an infant, reading to him at an early age and helping him play simple games, have many lasting effects.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT PREVENTION It is important, as always, to stress the prevention of child abuse and neglect during the developmental years. Greater attention must be given to preventing maltreatment before it starts. High-quality home visitation programs which start working with families as soon as the child is born have proven to be effective in preventing abuse and neglect. These programs help parents manage the stresses of raising children and prevent unhealthy patterns from developing.

PROPER PRENATAL CARE Many studies have shown the devastating effects on intelligence and brain development from a lack of basic nutrients at the prenatal stage, in infancy and early childhood. Educational and outreach campaigns to alert women to the importance of nutrition during pregnancy would also be helpful in preventing problems that can arise in this critical period when brain cells begin to form.

The Effect of Abuse and Neglect on Brain Development

At the CIVITAS Child Trauma Programs at Baylor College of Medicine, Bruce Perry and co-workers have studied the impact of neglect and trauma on the neurobiology of over 1,000 abused and neglected children. In one study, 20 children who had been raised in globally under-stimulating environments- children who were rarely touched or spoken to and who had little opportunity to explore and experiment with toys- were examined with sophisticated new brain-imaging techniques and other measures of brain growth. The children were found to have brains that were physically 20 to 30 percent smaller than most children their age and, in over half the cases, parts of the children's brains appeared to have literally wasted away. --- *Starting Smart: How early experiences affect brain development. An Ounce of Prevention Fund, 1996.*

CHILD CARE PROVIDER EDUCATION

Consistent, healthy care from child care providers is another factor affecting proper brain development. An increasing number of infants and toddlers are spending most of their day in child care arrangements so parents can work. This relationship is one of the most important a child will ever form. However, too often child care providers are poorly trained, underpaid, and do not provide children with appropriate stimulation. Research has shown that in the majority of infant care arrangements in the U.S., children are not talked to and played with enough, and they do not have the opportunity to form the kind of comfortable, secure relationships with a caregiver that will promote their healthy emotional development. Programs like *T.E.A.C.H.* can assist in educating child care providers.

CHOOSING QUALITY CHILD CARE Parents should be given information about how to choose high quality child care for their children, as is available from many child care resource and referral offices around North Carolina. In addition, special attention must be given to the development and enforcement of child care licensing standards that promote high-quality care.

Our increasingly technically and socially complex society cannot afford to continue to allow large numbers of children to miss out on the positive experiences they need in infancy and early childhood; the costs in terms of lost intellectual potential and increased rates of emotional and behavioral problems, are too high. The new developments in brain research show us what children need; our challenge is to ensure that every child receives it!

Brain development makes economic sense

To invest early in a child's life to build a good foundation for learning and emotional development can save taxpayers a tremendous amount of money. Here are a few examples:

- **Risk vs. Opportunity-** Specific cost benefit ratios:
Family Planning- Save \$4.40 for every \$1
Quality Preschool- Save \$7.16 for every \$1
Home Visits- Save \$5.63 for every \$1
School-Based Clinics- Save \$7 for every \$1

- **Get businesses involved-** To increase the productivity of any business, employees need to be assured the care their child is receiving is adequate, reliable and of high quality. To have a well-qualified workforce tomorrow, we must start with nurturing today's growing brains.

GETTING THE MESSAGE OUT: A grassroots example

As part of her professional development goals this year, Dr. Dean Clifford, executive director of the Forsyth Early Childhood Partnership, has set out on a mission. Her goal is to find out as much as she can about the latest in early childhood brain development and share that knowledge within her community. She has already made presentations about the importance of brain research to the Forsyth County Smart Start board, subcontractors, parent educators, and civic groups and currently is planning a training session for child care providers.

Clifford recently attended the national *Parents As Teachers* conference in St. Louis, MO where brain development was the focus. Top researchers in the country attended the conference to share their findings and discuss its implications. At the conference, Clifford stressed this

We've never had such an effective tool for advocacy.

— Dr. Dean Clifford

critical information must be translated and understandable for parents and child care providers and it must be shared throughout every community.

"Brain research stresses the window of opportunity in a child's life for brain growth and development," Clifford stresses. "It is our responsibility to use this opportunity to talk about this issue everywhere we go.

"This is an issue that captures the attention of businesses, school teachers, community leaders. We have to capitalize on that attention so everyone in the community knows about this."

The latest research validates what Smart Start had been working on for years. Clifford has used every opportunity to spread this message. She is actively looking for upcoming civic and religious meetings and presentations that she can participate in. This is what we all must do to ensure that every parent knows about this critical information.

From taxi drivers to the person sitting next to her on an airplane, Clifford tells everyone she meets about this important information; and Clifford's enthusiasm is catching on.

Following the *Train the Trainer* session facilitated by researcher Dorothy Routh of Florida State University earlier this year, a small group, led by NCPC Evaluation Coordinator Sharon Thompson, is developing 20-minute and two hour presentations on the latest brain research. These presentations will be available to local partnership executive directors to share within their communities. These presentations are expected to be available in Spring 1998.

In conjunction with the *I Am Your Child* national public engagement campaign, parenting videos, CD-ROM, booklets, fact sheets and flyers are now available to help families understand this information. Also, a comprehensive study from the Rand Corporation is expected to be released late December 1997 or early January 1998 that focuses on the economic aspects of quality child care and the role of businesses in providing quality child care.

GLOSSARY OF BRAIN TERMS

Dendrite- finger-like extensions of a neuron that receives signals or chemical messages and stimulates activity in the receiving neuron

Neurons- brain cells which are rapidly developed before birth, but are no longer formed after birth

Neurotransmitters- an on/off switch that acts as a chemical switchboard which regulates the brain's senses and behavior. Types of neurotransmitters include *melatonin*, *serotonin*, *endorphins*, *cortisol*, *noradrenaline*

Melatonin- chemical which promotes sleep and is activated by calcium and darkness

Serotonin- low levels of this chemical are associated with aggression and anger; moderate levels- relaxation and sleep

Endorphin- chemical released in presence of pain, vigorous exercise and relaxation

Cortisol- found in saliva, this chemical regulates stress to protect our body from physical danger

Noradrenaline- leads to heightened awareness, rapid heart beat; puts body in fight or flight mode

PET Scan- (positron-emission tomography) new technology that allows scientists to see and measure the brain's activity

Plasticity- the brain's ability to develop and change in response to the demands of the environment

Pruning- the elimination of excess synapses or connections that creates a more powerful and efficient system of connections or pathways; pruning also allows the remaining synapses to function at a higher level

Synapse- a neuron connection made depending on the stimuli or signals from the brain

Wiring- the architectural design of the brain; the network of connections which allows thinking and learning



Smart Start Press

WINSTON-SALEM JOURNAL

A Media General Newspaper

•••••

416-420 North Marshall Street
Winston-Salem, N.C. 27101

FOUNDED APRIL 3, 1897

JON H. WITHERSPOON
Publisher

CARL M. CROTHERS
Managing Editor

JOHN D. GATES
Editorial Page Editor

V.C. "PAT" TAYLOR III
General Manager

SMART START

Giving children a chance

If you isolate Smart Start from the rest of the many programs government helps to pay for, you can perhaps make a case that government doesn't belong in the business of raising children.

But the minute you place Smart Start in the context of government efforts to reduce crime, improve equal opportunity and enhance the public good, any such argument goes up in smoke.

Smart Start, the state's showcase program for early childhood development, is right in theory and appears to be working as intended.

The scientific research is not entirely unambiguous about the effectiveness of early childhood development programs. Without follow-up programs, initial improvements can sometimes be lost over time. But generally speaking, the science is clear that children learn most of what will influence their development as adults before they enter kindergarten.

The science is also clear that money spent on these programs is an investment in the future that pays many returns in terms of social and criminal costs saved. There is no question that getting started right is easier and less expensive than correcting early mistakes.

It doesn't seem to require a highly developed sense of what's right to know that preventing crime is better than punishing it, that avoiding the need for welfare is better than trying to force people off the rolls once they get there.

The only equivocation about Smart Start that is warranted at the moment is

that the program has not been up and running long enough for a serious or comprehensive evaluation of results. The indications are all that it is working as intended, but why things are better, specifically, is not yet subject to scientific analysis.

None of which is to argue that Smart Start is an antidote to all the nation's future social ills. It is, however, to suggest that Smart Start detractors are arguing from swampy ground. There is ample and incontrovertible evidence that early childhood development is vitally important to future development, and there is no evidence that Smart Start is not working.

Another lame argument against Smart Start is that it helps children who don't need it. The research shows that the primary beneficiaries are the children of the poor and the working poor, but all children can and should be served, and by not limiting help according to family economic status, Smart Start avoids the stigma of being labeled another welfare program.

Smart Start programs in some counties are in need of fine-tuning. The initiative is not an unqualified success in all its manifestations. But such reservations are inadequate reasons for stalling the inclusion of all 100 North Carolina counties in the program.

Most of Smart Start's detractors have agendas that are not solely devoted to giving our children their best chance to lead productive lives. That's what Smart Start is about, and there is nothing we do that should have a higher priority.



I advise and enjoin those who direct the paper in the tomorrows never to advocate any cause for personal profit or preferment. I would wish it always to be "the tocsin" and to devote itself to the policies of equality and justice to the underprivileged. If the paper should at any time be the voice of self-interest or become the spokesman of privilege or selfishness it would be untrue to its history.

— from the will of Josephus Daniels, Editor and Publisher 1894-1948

Much to do for kids...

Reports on the lives of North Carolina's children offer some good news but also some distressing figures. And they prove the wisdom in the governor's emphasis on early childhood.

North Carolina likes to think of itself as a progressive Southern state, one generally ahead of others with regard to education, business development, race relations, arts and the other measures of enlightenment. Thanks to a succession of moderate governors and a fine university and community college system, that pride isn't misplaced. But it can lead to overconfidence, and reports on the state of children within North Carolina's borders show that while things might be coming up roses for some of us, many children are hurting.

That's the bottom line in reports from the N.C. Child Advocacy Institute in its exhaustive statistical study on children and their quality of life, or lack thereof. Another report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, a group that promotes better child care, ranks North Carolina 39th in child well-being, a ranking based on various statistics that include birth rates among teenagers (they're up) and infant mortality rates (they're down). The only good news, perhaps, in that ranking is that it's an improvement of three places over last year.

The institute's findings, however, carry more meaning than a ranking. They point to some concrete difficulties

facing North Carolina's children: An increase of over 100 percent in the divorce rate in the last quarter-century has left more kids than ever in single-parent homes, with the accompanying time constraints and stresses on family; many of those single parents are poor, with 47 percent at or below the poverty level; reports of child abuse and neglect are up dramatically; the number of kids in foster care has jumped in the last 10 years, with over 6,000 of this state's children in such care.

In a state where there is a mix of urban and rural populations, statistics are tricky, in that situations vary widely from county to county. So do available services for children, whether those services are day-care centers or pre-schools or transportation or health care. There are, in many ways, several North Carolinas when it comes to what is available, and what is not available, to help impoverished or troubled children.

That is why early childhood initiatives — Governor Hunt seeks an expansion of his Smart Start program to all 100 counties — must be intensified. That is why they deserve political support and public support. Nothing less than the state's future is at stake.

...smartly doing our part

The report that private donations for Smart Start exceeded \$10 million last year is good news for the program itself in terms of operational costs, but the donations are an important symbol as well. They are a symbol that the program — which seeks to help poor children get a leg up on school through better child care, additional classroom personnel and other efforts — is gaining momentum in North Carolina.

Let that be a lesson to the naysayers, many of whom seemed to attack Governor Hunt's program merely because it was his program. Smart Start may have been of political value to the governor, but so what? The benefits to North Carolina's children can be breathtaking as the program expands to meet the needs of kids who have been denied routine advantages many families take for granted.

It's clear that the corporations which have supported the program believe it can help change the face of the state, and expand the horizons of thousands of

children for whom those horizons have been unacceptably limited. That translates to better education, better jobs and a better quality of life for these kids and their kids.

Critics continue to qualify their descriptions of Smart Start by saying the program still is unproven. But that's a petty and silly point: The program essentially is still in its infancy; it will take time before the results are concrete. The alternative to Smart Start, moreover, is to do nothing. That is not an option in a state where not enough has been done to give encouragement and incentive to those who are trying desperately to improve their children's lot in life, but who find themselves held down by poverty, a lack of education, the resulting limits on employment options, and simple fate.

Smart Start can do something about that. It deserves public and private support to the fullest extent the corporations and citizens of the state can muster.

EDITORIALS

The right track

Smart Start auditors: Expand the program

When the 1995 General Assembly was engaged in a partisan debate over the bipartisan Smart Start initiative for children, Republicans insisted on an outside audit of the program before they committed to expansion.

That audit is now in: Smart Start, auditors at Coopers & Lybrand said, "is a credible program that delivers substantial good to children and families in the state of North Carolina." After making some needed accounting, funding and programmatic changes, the program should not only be continued, the auditors said, but expanded from its current 24 partnerships to an additional 12.

What the audit shows, state officials say, is that the \$58-million-a-year Smart Start program is on the right track in providing services and meeting the needs of children in those communities. But to make Smart Start fulfill its promise, the auditors say, certain changes must be made. Among them:

- Shifting responsibility for program accounting and contract management to the N.C. Partnership for Children.

- Requiring partnerships to allot at least 30 percent of their funds for child care subsidies and restrict brick-and-mortar expenditures to no more than 10 percent.

- Revising Smart Start's funding formula. Some counties like Mecklenburg have been shortchanged. The county's Smart Start needs were calculated at \$20.4 million, but its allocation was only \$3.9 million — about 19.5 percent.

The ideal administrative structure is debatable. But strong internal controls are necessary for public and legislative confidence in the initiative. And revising the funding formula is essential if counties like Mecklenburg are to meet the enormous needs outlined by the state's own formula.

By now, the General Assembly has ample evidence that, despite nagging accounting and programmatic difficulties, Smart Start is neither the political boondoggle Republicans feared nor the intrusive government bureaucracy they forecast. The evidence suggests that Smart Start already has made significant improvements in the quality of care delivered to many children.

Some GOP lawmakers argue that Smart Start needs more analysis. If they really believed that, they would push for more money for assessments by the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center at UNC Chapel Hill. Coopers & Lybrand recommended just that. Measuring results takes time, because it takes time for children served by Smart Start to grow up. Only through the sort of ongoing analysis that the center provides can the state gather evidence of the program's long-term impact.

Perhaps what GOP House leaders like least about Smart Start is that Jim Hunt thought of it and pushed it into creation — and it's working. Last week House Speaker Harold Brubaker and Majority Leader Leo Daughtry told reporters the audit confirmed their concerns about accountability. But Mr. Brubaker insisted they never questioned "the importance or the good of the program. What we were concerned about is accountability." To provide it, they said, a retired business executive should be put in charge.

Good. They should talk to retired business executive Paul Broyhill, a member of the prominently Republican Broyhill family. Last week Mr. Broyhill, retired Broyhill Furniture Industries chairman, contributed \$100,000 to Caldwell County's Smart Start partnership.

That's a splendid endorsement of an excellent idea. When the General Assembly convenes May 13, lawmakers who really want to do something for children should tighten up the Smart Start program and get on with expanding it.

FRIDAY, October 24, 1997

Money, training urged for day care

■ Experts, officials gather at Forsyth Tech to discuss solutions to the 'silent crisis'

By John Hinton
JOURNAL REPORTER

Day-care providers must maintain professional standards to ensure the quality of child care, a state official said yesterday.

"We have come a long way," said Stephanie Farjul, the director of the N.C. Division of Child Development, an agency that helps day-care operators and providers statewide.

"It will require enormous vigilance for us to stay where we are," Farjul said. "There is pressure on us to go backward and make us baby sitters."

Farjul joined other state officials, child-care experts and care providers in a panel discussion at the Forsyth Technical Community College. Earlier in the day, they were among about 50 people in Ardmore Hall who watched a televised White House conference about raising the quality of child care without raising costs. As much as anything, the conference was meant to "start a conversation," said Hillary Rodham Clinton, calling the problems facing many parents a "silent crisis."

Gov. Jim Hunt attended the conference and spoke about North Carolina's Smart Smart initiative, which seeks to improve education and other services for young children.

See CHILDREN, Page A9

■ Gov. Hunt steps down from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. B1.

See CHILDREN, Page A9

CHILDREN

Continued From Page A1

Fanjul and other officials said they are pleased that Hunt promoted Smart Start. The program operates in 55 counties, providing education, health care and family services to more than 100,000 children under 6.

"Smart Start can work for North Carolina children and families," said Ashley Thrift, the chairman of the N.C. Partnership for Children, the agency that operates the Smart Start program. "But only half of the eligible children in North Carolina are participating in Smart Start."

The need for day care is increasing in North Carolina as more adults leave the state's welfare rolls and find jobs, Fanjul said. But the demand for child care won't be met unless community colleges hire more instructors to train providers.

More than 26,000 providers have received training from community colleges in early childhood education, a spokesman for Hunt said yesterday.

Increased training for day-care workers is among the goals of Smart Start.

Day-care workers must also receive higher salaries, and day-care centers must charge affordable fees, Fanjul said, echoing experts at the White House conference who told the Clintons that the key to high-quality child care is talented workers. But it's tough to find and keep them when the average pay is just \$6.89 an hour, they said. One-third of workers leave their jobs each year.

As child-care workers earn associate and bachelor degrees, they will deserve higher salaries, said Kathy Shepherd, a public-policy coordinator for the N.C. child-development division.

That was good news to Elizabeth Fields, the Head Start director in Salisbury and Rowan County. Fields said she has difficulty hiring and keeping child-care providers because a textile mill pays its workers up to \$13 an hour.

"Smart Start is a good program," she said. "But no one is pushing to pay child-care workers higher wages. People want child-care providers to be mothers, fathers and policemen. But they are only paid \$5.25 an hour with no benefits."

The federal role in child care has been limited, mostly providing money to help subsidize costs for low-income families. Yesterday, President Clinton proposed a modest package of help. He said he will present a more comprehensive proposal next year. His suggestion would give the federal government a slightly broader focus but would not carry a major investment:

- Setting up a scholarship fund that would provide \$300 million over five years to help up to 50,000 child-care providers get additional training. The workers, who would get \$1,500 each, would have to remain in the field at least a year. They would be guaranteed a raise when they finished.

It's modeled after a North Carolina program, where teachers received raises averaging 10 percent. The people in the program had a turnover rate of less than 10 percent, compared with 42 percent for the state.

- Eliminating state barriers to checking criminal backgrounds of child-care workers. That plan must be approved by Congress and all 50 states.

- Forming a group of business leaders, headed by Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin, to look for ways to provide on-site child care or help employees afford it.

Clinton promised that child care will be a priority next year, although he acknowledged that there will be "fierce competition for limited money."

Material from The Associated Press was used in this story.

Wednesday, July 1, 1998

Smart Start backers say study proves plan works

By Mark Stinneford

Raleigh bureau

As legislators open their debate over expanding Smart Start, supporters of the preschool program are touting a study that they say shows it works.

SMART START STUDY
Results of a Mecklenburg County study on the effect of Smart Start programs on school readiness.

FINDING
 Study of 5,409 kindergarten students in Charlotte-Mecklenburg school system in 1996-1997 found that students did better on two measures of school readiness if they attended child-care centers participating in Smart Start programs.

MEASUREMENTS USED
 Kindergarten Awareness Profile: Beginning of year assessment done by teachers to measure students' social and emotional readiness, language skills, intellectual ability and physical health.
 Average scores (out of possible 102):
 ■ Smart Start children: 93.35
 ■ Non-Smart Start: 91.05

Kindergarten Assessment in Reading and Mathematics: Assessment of students by teachers done several times during the year to measure students' readiness for first-grade math and reading.
 Average scores (out of possible 34):
 ■ Smart Start children: 32.18
 ■ Non-Smart Start: 29.83

The study of 5,409 kindergarten students in Mecklenburg County indicates that children who attended day-care centers that participated in intensive Smart Start programs were better prepared for school than those who didn't.

The study is the first to show a link between Smart Start participation and school readiness.

"This demonstrates that in Mecklenburg County, where Smart Start has been since January of 1994, children are better prepared for school, compared to children who are not involved in Smart Start," said Karen Ponder, program director for the N.C. Partnership for Children.

The results come as the legislature is considering Gov. Jim Hunt's request to spend \$57 million more on Smart Start to get the program going in 45 counties that don't have it. A budget expected to be approved by the Senate

today includes the extra \$57 million.

The state spent \$95 million on the program in the fiscal year that ended Tuesday. Smart Start could cost \$350 million a year when all counties have full-fledged programs.

The Mecklenburg study looked at the effect on students of centers involved in intensive SmartStart programs, those that provide training to child care workers and operators and award grants for such things as educational materials and playground equipment. The centers participated in those programs to varying degrees.

The study was conducted by the local school system and the county Smart Start program. It looked at two measures that teachers in Mecklenburg County use to evaluate kindergarten students: the Kindergarten Awareness Profile and the Kindergarten Assessment in Reading and Mathematics.

Early profile

The awareness profile is used at the beginning of the year to measure social and emotional readiness for school, language skills, intellect and health. Out of a possible score of 102, students from Smart Start centers averaged 93.35, compared to 91.05 for students not at Smart Start centers.

The other assessment is done several times during the year to gauge students' preparation for first grade reading and math. Out of a possible score of 34, Smart Start participants averaged 32.18, compared to 29.83 for non-Smart Start children.

A leading researcher of Smart Start said the Mecklenburg study showed that Smart Start had an effect on school readiness, but it was difficult to conclude from the study how significant the effect was.

"It looks promising," said Donna Bryant, director of the child-care research program at the Frank Porter

Graham Child Development Center in Chapel Hill. "What I'd love to know is the clinical **significance.**"

A Smart Start critic picked up on the same point.

John Hood, president of the conservative John Locke Foundation, said the study failed to demonstrate that the program's effect is worth the money.

"While these might be statistically significant differences, they're not big differences at all," Hood said. "You're not just interested in whether there's an impact, you're interested in whether there's a significant impact, significant enough to justify millions of dollars. Then you're looking for a lasting impact, not an impact that lasts for a single year."

Bryant is looking into whether a more significant effect can be demonstrated. The Frank Porter Graham center has been hired to lead an evaluation of Smart Start and is conducting a study of the program's effect on school readiness in 43 counties, including Cumberland.

Data never conclusive

Smart Start evaluators say they will probably never get the kind of conclusive data that critics want. The program is operated differently by nonprofit groups that control Smart Start spending in participating counties or regions. There is no such thing as a Smart Start-operated center.

"Smart Start is very comprehensive, and it's very different county to county," said Rhode Bicknell, evaluation coordinator for the Cumberland County Partnership for Children.

"There is no other program in the state like it. It's not like a medical study -- this is a group taking medication, and this is a group taking the placebo. It's not that simple. Designing things to measure the success of all these things is very challenging at best."

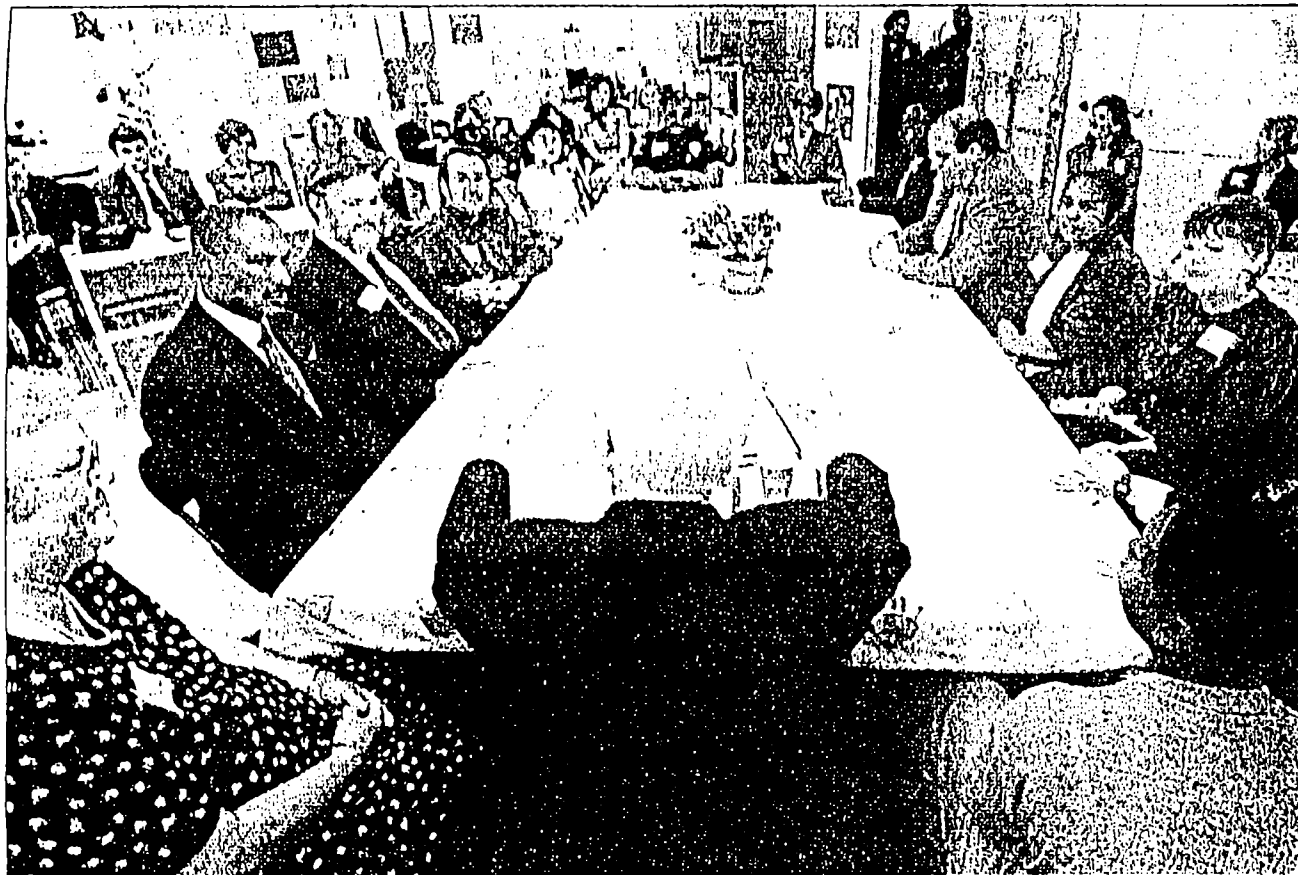
But program supporters believe that the evidence is growing for the program's effectiveness. A study released last year by the Frank Porter Graham Center concluded that the quality of day-care centers had improved in the 18 original counties, including Cumberland, that got the program going in 1994.

"We can show improvement, which is the key factor," Bicknell said. "We can show quality is improving. We can show in small studies that there's a correlation between intensity of Smart Start services received and school readiness. Do we have to prove it in every county, every time?"

"I don't feel that we're not proving the worth of Smart Start."

News | Community | Marketplace | Search

Local material copyright 1998 Fayetteville (N.C.) Observer-Times



Photos by KENT D. JOHNSON/Staff

Gov. Jim Hunt addresses questions from a roomful of parents and teachers at Lakewood Preschool Cooperative in Charlotte Tuesday morning. The preschool received a \$72,000 grant in 1995 from Hunt's Smart Start plan.

Hunt relishes success

Governor visits a gem of his Smart Start plan

By KATHLEEN CURRY
Staff Writer

On a sparkling Tuesday afternoon in northwest Charlotte, Gov. Jim Hunt got a chance to rest on his laurels and build a block tower or two.

Hunt was in town with the Council of State for two days of meetings with political and business leaders. After lunch Tuesday, he drove to the Lakewood Preschool Cooperative, to see what \$72,000 in a state grant buys.

He discovered that, in the hands of people like Lakewood founder Claire Tate, seed money can fuel \$700,000 worth of sweat and donations to build airy classrooms, fill them with toys and build a playground in the dappled shade.

"Some people say I get excited easily," Hunt enthused. "I don't know, but I don't think I've ever seen anything better than this."

Lakewood Preschool received \$72,000 in 1995 from

Hunt's ambitious Smart Start plan, which targets poor preschool children to better prepare them for kindergarten. Hunt has battled furiously since 1993 for Smart Start, which now costs the state \$100 million annually. In May, the N.C. General Assembly will debate supporting Hunt's latest budget increase for Smart Start — more than \$157 million next year to expand the program statewide.

At Lakewood, he found a notebook full of ammunition for his argument.

As he followed Executive Director Karen Callahan into the center's playrooms, Hunt scribbled facts and figures about the building — built entirely with donated labor and supplies by Habitat for Humanity — the programs and the students.

He hunkered down on the mat for a session of tower-building with Angel Truong and marveled at the center's novel parent education center, filled with books, videos, and computers



Teacher Lydia Ingram (left) sits with Ladarrian McLeod (front right), 1, as Gov. Jim Hunt (right) plays with Kevin Truong (center), 3, and Jasmine Barbour, 5, at the preschool Tuesday.

just for families. Instead of paying for their children to attend the part-day school, parents commit to volunteer and to attend weekly parenting classes.

"I've been in family resource centers all over the state, but I don't think I've ever been in a parent room like that," Hunt said, marveling at the Polaroid snapshots on the wall of each

child's parent or grandparent.

Later, he met with Lakewood residents and some of the children's parents. He heard one testament after another to the good the center has wrought, both in the lives of the children and in the troubled Lakewood neighborhood.



KENT D. JOHNSON/Staff

Lakewood Preschool Cooperative parents Jim Yarborough, president of the Lakewood Community Association; Pam Dye, parish nurse for Presbyterian Health Care; and Mei Her talk to Gov. Jim Hunt at the preschool Tuesday.

Hunt relishes a Smart Start success

LAKWOOD

Continued from page 1C

"My Randy, his language has been helped a lot. He's learning things now I never thought he'd know," said Tammy Phillips, whose son will celebrate his fourth birthday at the center today. "He knows his ABCs and his colors and he wants to learn." Phillips' older son, Daquarius, 7, didn't have that kind of start when he entered kindergarten, Phillips said.

Mai Her, whose daughter Cindy Thao attends the school, said it has helped her daughter learn English and the family expand its knowledge, too. "We

love to come each week and see what new things they have for us to do," Her said.

Said Jim Yarborough, president of the Lakewood Community Association: "I was born and raised on Lakewood Avenue. This place is my heart. I am so proud of this."

Lakewood is a melting pot of black, Vietnamese, Hmong and Hispanic families with an average household income of \$10,580 in 1996. Nearly 40 percent of Lakewood adults don't work; single parents head 70 percent of its households. The dozen new homes Habitat built recently sit near crumbling houses with tar paper roofs.

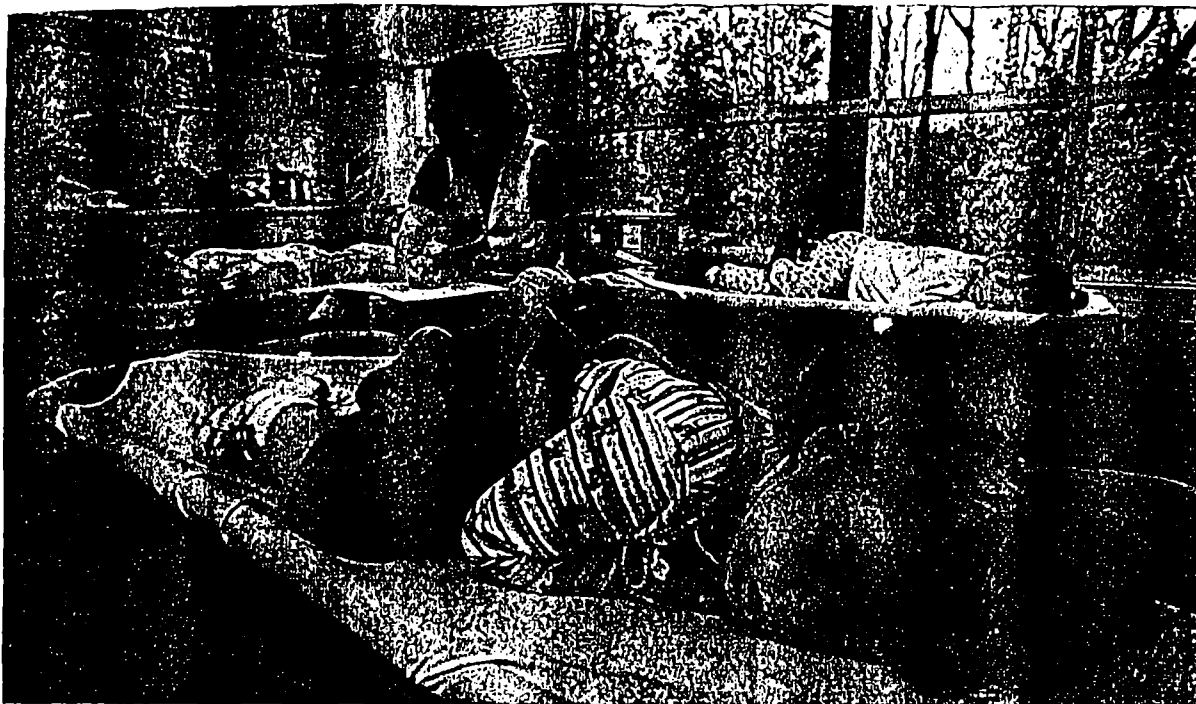
Officer Milton Harris, a community police officer assigned to Lakewood, says juvenile crime in the area is among the worst in the city. When Hunt asked Harris what the governor could do to make a police officer's life easier, Harris said "this right here," and pointed to the school. "If you don't get them early, teach them to like education and to have hope," Harris said, "they grow up thinking they can't do anything, and they take shortcuts. And then they run into me."

Earlier Tuesday, Hunt and the state's executive council met at the White Oaks retreat in Charlotte's Myers Park neighborhood, home of the Lynnwood Foundation.

1
A
6
in
C
8
1

NCPC News Summary

the week of January 5 - January 9, 1998



While preschoolers nap, teacher Kara Smith works on her lesson plans at Glaxo Wellcome's day-care center in Research Triangle Park. STAFF PHOTOS BY CHUCK LIDDY

Clinton touts value of child care

In N.C., politics becomes child's play

BY ROB CHRISTENSEN
STAFF WRITER

RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK — It was not the usual kind of political chitchat. The subjects included potty training and breast pumps, pregnancy and Play-Doh.

But with President Clinton proposing a package of tax breaks and grants for day care, Democratic political figures fanned out across the Triangle on Wednesday to voice support for the president's efforts to help working parents find quality child care.

In the morning, Rep. Bob Etheridge was at a Raleigh day-care center, bending his 6½-foot frame to work at a toddler-size table. At lunch, Rep. David Price was crouching on the floor talking with preschoolers in Research Triangle Park, dazzling them with his ability to spell E-R-I-C. And in midafternoon, Gov. Jim Hunt was at a Zebulon day-care center touting his own Smart Start program for preschoolers.

SEE CHILD CARE, PAGE 14A



Kristen Harris, left, and Elise Watson lunch while Rep. David Price talks to reporters.

The president's plan entails tax credits and other subsidies to improve the quality of care while keeping it affordable.

BY MURIEL DOBBIN
N&O WASHINGTON BUREAU

WASHINGTON — Declaring that the nation faces no more significant challenge than providing for its children, President Clinton on Wednesday proposed a \$21.7 billion, five-year package of tax breaks and grants he described as "the single largest national commitment to child care in the history of the United States."

"There is no more fundamental value than raising a child," Clinton said at a White House ceremony marking the announcement of a second

major social initiative within 24 hours. "As a nation, we have to admit we have not done what we should have done to enable all of our families to meet the challenge of the era in which we live."

The package is designed to:

- Double the number of children receiving child-care subsidies to 2 million.

- Dramatically expand income-tax breaks for family child-care expenses.

- Double the number of children eligible for Head Start programs to 160,000.

- Subsidize businesses that operate child-care centers or help employees with child-care expenses; and

- Fund a variety of other programs designed to make child care better and more affordable.

The massive blueprint for child care, which came a day after Clinton proposed new

SEE CLINTON, PAGE 14A

N&O Jan 8, 1998

CHILD CARE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

Day care used to be known in the political trade as "a women's issue." But lately it has been moving to the forefront — pushed nationally by Clinton and his wife, Hillary Rodham Clinton, and in North Carolina by Hunt.

Giving new impetus to the issue have been record employment levels; the need to move more welfare mothers into the work force; and new studies emphasizing the importance of early nurturing in the development of the brain.

"There is no question this is an issue that the Democrats own," said Ted Arrington, chairman of the political science department at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

"It's the kind of issue the Democrats love," Arrington said. "It's the kind of thing that affects the middle class as well as the working class. It suggests that government has a role. If Republicans argue that government doesn't have a role they are going to get creamed because all working couples — and that means almost everybody — are having trouble with day care."

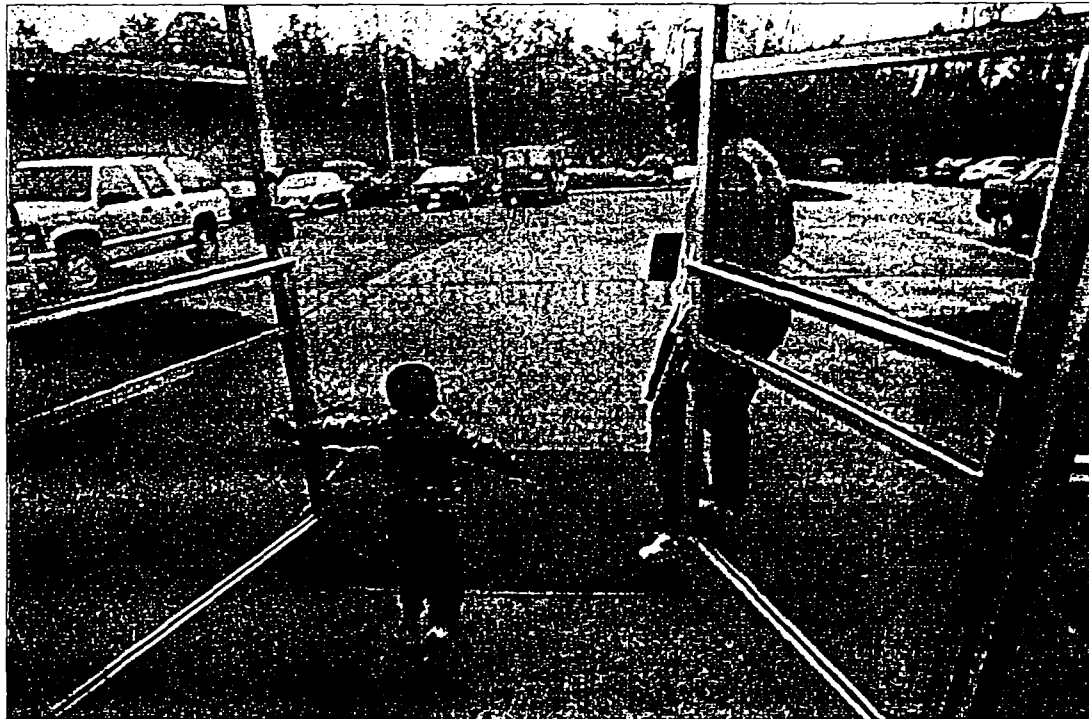
The issue is attractive to Democrats for other reasons as well. The Clinton proposal offers tax credits and subsidies rather than a huge new federal program with a bureaucracy. And those most affected by day-care concerns are couples in their 20s and 30s — a critical group for any party to win over.

"The main thing driving the issue is the need," Price said. "You do have more and more situations where both parents are working. Even families that are reasonably well off have trouble often affording child care."

In North Carolina, where recent improvements in day care belie some of the lowest standards in the nation, the average cost of child care ranges from \$95 to \$120 per week.

"It's a family issue," Price said. "It's an economic issue. No matter whether you are a Republican or Democrat or liberal or conservative, there are good reasons to pay some attention to child care."

Price visited the Glaxo Wellcome center, where the pharmaceutical



Byron Rogers, 2, heads for home from WakeMed's KidWorks day-care center with his mom, Odessa Rogers.

STAFF PHOTO BY ROBERT WILLETT

giant provides the kind of model day-care program for employees that Clinton is trying to encourage.

Price heard parents gush over the benefits of having a quality day-care center where they work. They said they commute to work with their children. They are nearby if there is an illness. Mothers can breast-feed babies. And in the case of Glaxo, there are quality teachers and a low child-teacher ratio.

Ngoc-Anh Nguyen of Durham, a senior group leader in pharmaceutical development at Glaxo and the mother of two, said she had passed up opportunities to work for other companies because Glaxo's day-care program is so exceptional.

"It has provided me with peace of mind," she said.

"It has meant the world for my family," added Alice Swearingen, a

Glaxo manager and mother of two who lives in Holly Springs. "My husband and I both work here. Just the security of knowing we can see our children any time. If there is an emergency we are right here. We are closer to the teachers than we might be."

Day care has become such an important political issue that Congress now has its own Early Childhood Development Caucus. Among its members are Etheridge and Rep. Bob Weygand of Rhode Island, both of whom visited the KidWorks child-care center run by WakeMed.

Etheridge, a former state superintendent of schools who still sports a tie covered in blackboards and "apples for the teacher," helped a class full of 3-year-olds roll Play-Doh and cut it into shapes.

After years of visiting grade-school classrooms, he's the first to admit that the political emphasis has shifted to the pre-K set.

"I think there's been a realization that if we're going to improve our quality of life, we've got to improve the quality of care children are receiving long before they start school," Etheridge said.

"If we can provide quality care, we're going to see the incidence of delinquency go down and academic achievement go up," Etheridge said. "On the work side, we're going to see improved attendance and productivity. Child care is a big concern especially for the mothers, but also for more and more fathers."

Staff writer Ruth Sheehan contributed to this report.

Rob Christensen can be reached at 879-4532 or robc@wando.com

Child-care proposals

Key elements of President Clinton's proposal to boost federal spending on child care by \$21.7 billion over five years.

State grants: Would increase state subsidies to low-income working parents from \$3 billion a year to \$5 billion by 2003. Aim is to increase from 1 million to 2 million the number of children getting assistance.

Cost: \$7.5 billion

Income-tax credits: Would sweeten income-tax credits for parents with child-care expenses, reducing taxes by an average \$358 a year for 3 million families.

Maximum benefit of \$2,400 per child and \$4,800 in total.

Cost: \$5.2 billion

Business credits: Would give businesses a 25 percent tax credit for the costs of operating a child-care facility, starting up a new one, or providing child-care subsidies to employees.

Cost: \$500 million

Head Start: Would double number of children eligible for early Head Start programs to 160,000. Head start provides extra help for needy children up to age 3.

Cost: \$3.8 billion

After-school program: Would boost annual funding from \$40 million to \$200 million for Department of Education's after-school program.

Cost: \$960 million

Early-learning fund: Would establish grants to communities and public-private partnerships for early-childhood development.

Cost: \$3 billion

Enforcement: Would provide states extra help to enforce standards for child-care centers.

Cost: \$500 million

Training: Would provide scholarship fund for additional training of up to 10,000 child-care providers. Workers, who would get \$500 each, would have to train in the field at least a year.

Cost: \$250 million

Source: White House

U.S. & OBSERVER WASHINGTON BUREAU

CLINTON

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

Medicare protection for younger retirees, is part of a continuing administration drive to revamp the nation's social system within the framework of Clinton's pledge to propose a balanced 1999 budget.

On Friday, Clinton is expected to announce an expanded work-study plan for college students.

"Nothing must be permitted to undermine the responsibilities of parenthood," Clinton said. "No raise or promotion will ever top the joy of hugging a child after work."

In a smiling but wry reference to the recent departure of his daughter, Chelsea, for college in California, Clinton said, "Nothing can be more bittersweet than sending a child you once cradled in your arms off to college for the first time."

Arguing for Republicans to add their support, Clinton said, "This is an issue that touches nearly every family, and I believe it must rise above politics and partisan interests."

GOP not enthusiastic

Republicans said Clinton should expect no blank check from Congress and suggested he should be looking at broader tax relief. Reflecting GOP inclinations to

Child-care tax breaks

President Clinton has proposed tax breaks to make child care more affordable and available. Here are three scenarios:

Family type	Income tax with current law	Income tax with proposal
Single head of household One child Income: \$25,000 Child care costs: \$2,500	\$540	0
Married couple Two children Income: \$35,000 Child care costs: \$4,050	\$665	0
Married couple Two children Income: \$50,000 Child care costs: \$4,050	\$2,915	\$750

All children are under 13. Source: White House

block additional social spending, Sen. Phil Gramm, R-Texas, complained about the daily "big spending" ideas coming from the White House.

But other Republicans, acknowledging the popularity of the child-care issue with voters, were more muted in their criticism.

"I am pleased that the president seems to be fighting the urge to have the federal government control child care," said Rep. Deborah Pryce of Ohio. "Republicans in Congress will continue to look for ways to ease the tax burden on American families this year, for child-care expenses or any other family priority."

The new proposal was labeled by

Clinton a "comprehensive and fiscally responsible" way of raising the quality of child care, while making it more affordable and reliable.

The largest component calls for \$7.5 billion in increased block grants for states, doubling the number of children eligible for assistance by 2003.

The other big-ticket provision would significantly increase child-care tax credits for families making less than \$60,000 a year. The largest advantage would go to families earning \$30,000 or less. They could write off 50 percent of child-care expenses through credits—compared with the current 20 percent. An estimated 3 million families would benefit

by an average \$358 annually.

The tax benefits—a dollar-for-dollar reduction of income taxes—are capped at \$2,400 per child and \$4,800 for the family.

"There are too many children who, through no fault of their parents, are left to fend for themselves in the hours between 2 p.m. and 6 p.m.—too many children roaming the streets, idling in front of television or getting in trouble," Clinton said.

"I cannot emphasize the importance of this too much. The crime rate in this country has dropped dramatically in the last five years... but the juvenile crime rate has not."

"And where it has dropped, it is because people have found something positive for children to do in the hours between the time school ends and parents come home. We do not need to keep building jails for children who wouldn't be there if we took care of them."

Rigorous screening urged

The president underscored the importance of improving the safety and quality of child care, strengthening enforcement of state licensing and using tougher criminal background checks to weed out bad providers.

Donna Shalala, secretary of Health and Human Services, said the extra enforcement money would allow state officials to beef up checks on care centers that now are rarely visited.

The proposal depends in part on something that hasn't yet happened—a multibillion-dollar settlement with the tobacco industry. One-third of the money would come from the proposed deal, which Congress is to consider this year.

Knight-Ridder Tribune

Statesville Record & Landmark
Sat. Jan 3, 1998

Off to Smart Start

When a child is born,
new program is there

BY AUDREY MONTGOMERY
RECORD & LANDMARK

The Iredell Partnership for Young Children launched "Off to a Smart Start" at a local hospital on New Year's Day.

The Partnership is the local agency heading up Smart Start in the county, and "Off to a Smart Start" is one of the first projects to be initiated with 1997-98 Smart Start funding.

Beginning with babies born at Iredell Memorial Hospital, and possibly expanding to Columbia Davis Medical Center and Lake Norman Regional Medical Center, "Off to a Smart Start" is aimed at educating parents in the care of their babies.

"Experiences that fill babies' first days, months and years have a decisive impact on the structure of the child's brain and, in turn, on every aspect of a child's life throughout adulthood," said Vivian Hamilton, the Partnership's executive director.

The Partnership began its new program Jan. 2, when Willie Adams, program coordinator, presented a Welcome Baby Basket to Melissa Bass, mother of the first baby born in 1998 at Iredell Memorial Hospital, and to the mothers of other newborns.

The first baby of the new year,
Page 5A

Items in the baskets include an "I Am Your Child" video, with tips on child development and basic care of the baby during its first three years; baby's first library book; baby's first toy; a sippy cup, with advice on how to prevent baby bottle tooth decay; brochures on how to clean baby's mouth; a fingertip toothbrush; a growth chart; an immunization chart; a bib that reads, "I'm Off to a Smart Start with Iredell County Partnership for Young Children," and a directory of community education and support services available to parents.

Baskets will be presented to the parents of all newborns at the hospital.

"This is a parent education program funded by Smart Start that will eventually reach all new parents in Iredell County," Ms. Adams said. "It will encourage them to sing to their baby, read to their baby, touch their baby, and give them lots of nurturing love and care."

Adams is looking for volunteers to help deliver the baby baskets. Anyone interested in helping, should contact her at



BRUCE HATLOCK / RECORD & LANDMARK

Willie Adams, program coordinator for the Iredell Partnership for Young Children's "Off to a Smart Start" program, delivers Welcome Baby baskets at Iredell Memorial Hospital.

878-9290.

Smart Start, which was begun in 1993, is the state's public-private initiative aimed at helping all North Carolina children enter school healthy and ready to learn. Services are geared to providing children 5 and under access to high quality and affordable child care, health care and other critical family needs. Statewide, the program is administered through the North Carolina Partnership for Children.

The Iredell Partnership for Young Children received \$100,000 in planning money last year and \$479,871 in program funding in October.

Other projects getting off the ground locally are a dental program (funded through a grant from NationsBank), which is providing dental care for 26 children, and a Child Care Resource and Referral Service, which should be operational by February, Ms. Hamilton said.

STATE & LOCAL

Better child care is helping Smart Start

Improvements prepare youngsters for kindergarten, researchers say

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Child-care improvements in the 18 counties where Smart Start began bode well for the primary goal of the early childhood education initiative — better-prepared youngsters entering kindergarten, researchers said yesterday.

Researchers at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill said their evaluation of child-care programs suggests that Smart Start's goal of ensuring that youngsters are ready to begin school is attainable.

Researchers at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center at UNC-CH won't begin collecting data that will help determine whether Gov. Jim Hunt's signature education initiative has increased kindergartners' skills and health until this fall.

They said yesterday, however, that Smart Start has helped increase the overall quality of child care in the first 18 counties to sign up for program.

Twenty-five percent of the 187 child-care centers studied in 1996 attained a score of 5, the benchmark signifying "good" on a 7-point scale developed by Frank Porter Graham researchers to rate 37 child-care indicators. That compares with 14 percent of the 180 centers measured in 1994. Among the 91 child-care centers studied in both years, the percentage rated good or better rose from 13 percent in 1994 to 22 percent in 1996.

As a group, the pilot Smart Start counties increased its score for day-care quality from 4.25 on the 7-point scale in 1994 to 4.52 in 1996.

Smart Start advocates say that improvements in child care, as well as in other areas such as health services and family programs, will help ensure that youngsters are ready to begin school.

"The fact that an intermediate outcome is changing is positive," said Donna Bryant, the principal investigator of the study. "We have several other studies to show that child-care quality is related to children's cognitive and social outcomes."

Bryant said that the improvement in child care appears to be related to the proportion of Smart Start money that a local partnership spends on child care, the percentage of all money received by the partnership and the number of activities offered by a child-care center.

"THIS IS DYNAMITE stuff," said Stephane Farjul, the director of the N.C. Division of Child Development. "We've been hearing this from my inspectors who go out and look at programs, but that's not research data, that's just their experience."

David Walker, the executive director of the N.C. Partnership for Children, a nonprofit group that oversees the Smart Start program, said that the findings encouraged him.

"I would say the results are very, very promising and will certainly support our effort toward expansion," he said.

Investigators did note that some local Smart Start partnerships still complain about a lack of local decision-making.

"There's still some grumbling out in the hin-

terlands about the level of local autonomy," Bryant said. "It's certainly not as great a concern as it was two years ago. . . . The complaint sometime is, there's less willingness to try innovative ideas and strategies."

Part of that concern is linked to the General Assembly's requirements on how Smart Start money is spent.

After initially promising local partnerships wide latitude in decision-making and spending, the General Assembly last year set limits on the amount of money that local groups can spend on capital expenditures. Lawmakers also required that every partnership spend at least 30 percent of its money on child-care subsidies for low-income families.

Researchers released the results of their findings on the same day that Carolina Power and Light Co. announced that it will contribute \$1 million to the Smart Start program. Also yesterday, the N.C. Senate agreed to restore about \$3 million that it had cut from the \$23 million that Hunt wants to spend on Smart Start in the next fiscal year.

North Carolina now has 47 local Smart Start partnerships representing 55 counties. Applications for participation were sent last month to the remaining 45 counties.

Meanwhile, researchers will begin collecting data this fall on the health and skills of kindergartners in Smart Start counties. They will compare the data to information gathered two years ago on kindergartners in 44 Smart Start counties to determine whether the program is working.

"That's likely to be true, but at least you've gotten a much better trained person for the four or five years that you have them," Vardell says. "We have to continue to narrow the [salary] gap between child care and the public schools."

Outside of North Carolina, five states have instituted their own TEACH programs, with the blessing and guidance of Day Care Services. Two others are in the process of getting it off the ground.

TEACH has a sophisticated database to keep track of all the players involved—the centers, the students, and the colleges. And that's usually the first thing out-of-state visitors want to get their hands on.

But Day Care Service's Russell insists that they begin running the program in a low-tech way and with more face-to-face interaction with the providers.

"We don't want their time spent on managing the program," she says.

States have to agree to operate the program in essentially the same way North Carolina does. "We felt like if other states really wanted to replicate it, we wanted it to be done with some integrity," Russell says.

Still, those states have had to implement the program in a different political climate, with different higher education systems and with providers who have varying educational needs.

For example, the Georgia Association on Young Children, which has been running TEACH in that state for 3 1/2 years, has had trouble building political support for the program. The state already spends millions of lottery dollars on its popular college-scholarship program called HOPE, which stands for Helping Outstanding Pupils Educationally.

When possible, child-care providers go to school on a HOPE scholarship and then get "wraparound benefits," such as the bonus and reimbursements for books, from the TEACH program, says Tracey Bankhead, the project director for TEACH in Georgia.

Another obstacle there is the limited availability of child-care-degree programs. Only 17 of the 33 vocational-technical schools in the state offer them.

Just 60 providers in Georgia have benefited from TEACH since it began. The association is using federal child-care block grant dollars exclusively.

"Why can't lottery dollars support this program? There are 20,000 teachers in Georgia we could serve," Bankhead argues.

Even though Georgia's TEACH program hasn't reached many providers, the outcomes—such as higher wages and lower turnover—are the same, she adds. "Even if it's small, it absolutely works."

In four states—Florida, Illinois, New York, and Colorado—private funds from the American Business Collaboration for Quality De-

pendent Care, a partnership of 22 large companies, including Citibank, the American Express Co., and Johnson & Johnson—are also being used to support TEACH. Scholarship recipients are recruited from centers that serve a heavy concentration of parents who work for those 22 corporations.

But Ruckterstuhl from New York says she doesn't want to ask foundations to underwrite the program on a long-term basis.

About 30 participants have been through the program so far, and Ruckterstuhl would like it to grow as large as North Carolina's. Her organization is now seeking money from the state, but so far the idea has not been warmly received by state leaders.

"We hear that there is some discomfort about having the compensation piece tied to something that is state-funded," she says. "They don't want to dictate to private businesses how to pay their staff."

Another delicate issue, now facing child-care advocates in California, is what to do for providers who already have college-level training. One-third of the center-based teachers in that state have a bachelor's degree, says Marcy Whitebook, the executive director of the Center for the Child Care Workforce and a resident of Oakland, Calif.

"What you need depends on the workforce in your state," she says.

That is the issue troubling her about implementing a nationwide TEACH-style program. "If you design this, you have got to have something for people who already have their degree. I think TEACH is a really creative, good initiative, but I don't think it's the solution to the staffing crisis."

Russell agrees. The missing piece, she says, is North Carolina's WAGES salary-supplement program, which is paid for with money from another North Carolina program, Smart Start.

"When you put WAGES and TEACH together, you've got the answer," she says.

Gov. Hunt's Smart Start initiative is another nationally recognized effort that supports improvements in child care and other programs for young children at the county level. President Clinton has also proposed a plan similar to Smart Start, which he's calling an Early Learning Fund. With \$3 billion over five years, the fund would be used to help centers earn accreditation, provide teachers with basic training, and reduce staff-to-child ratios.

While TEACH focuses on getting teachers educated, WAGES—or Workers are Gaining Education and Salary—rewards those who are already trained with annual salary supplements. The more training they get, the higher the supplement. A teacher with a bachelor's degree can get an extra \$2,000 a year.

So far, only a handful of North Carolina's 100 counties use some of their Smart Start

money for WAGES. But more have indicated, in their written plans for the next two years, that they want to participate, says Karen Ponder, the program director at the North Carolina Partnership for Children in Raleigh, the nonprofit organization that runs Smart Start.

Center directors like WAGES because the money doesn't come out of their own budgets, meaning they don't have to raise fees for parents.

But apparently that message hasn't reached the president's advisers in Washington yet.

"It just broke my heart when I read the list of Smart Start-like activities and salary supplements weren't there," Russell says.

After 18 years in child care, Ton-dra Hunter now makes \$9.80 an hour teaching in Raleigh. While that's far better than some center teachers make, it's still meager enough to make her look for part-time work as well. For two months, she left her classroom at Kidworks at 2 p.m. and went straight to a large family child-care center to work until 6 p.m. But the strain became too much.

Even so, Hunter and other TEACH recipients don't plan to leave the early-childhood field. In fact, many of them now believe so strongly in the need for education that they want to be involved in some aspect of training themselves.

"All I had to do to get my license was have a fire extinguisher, plugs in my outlets, and a trash can with a lid," says Shelton, the family child-care provider in Chapel Hill. "I don't think people should have to do so little to open up their home to children." ■

This article appeared in the On Assignment section. Reprinted with permission from Education Week, Vol. XVII, Number 22, February 11, 1998.

EDITORIAL & BUSINESS OFFICES:

Suite 100, 6935 Arlington Road

Bethesda, MD 20814-5233

(301) 280-3100

FAX Editorial (301) 280-3200

FAX Business (301) 280-3250

Education Week is published 43 times per year by Editorial Projects in Education Inc. Subscriptions: U.S.: \$69.94 for 43 issues. Canada: \$96.59 for 43 issues.

might not have reached her goal. The first of 22 grandchildren to attend college, the 31-year-old Hunter, who teaches a class of 3-year-olds at Kidworks in Raleigh, was one of the state's first TEACH recipients.

It's taken her six years to earn a "two year" degree, but that doesn't bother her. What matters, she says, is that the grandmother who raised her is proud.

"I've done things I never thought I would do. I know something about child care," Hunter says as her students nap on their cots. "Now, everyone is pushing me to get my B.A."

Centers are also using TEACH to recruit teachers who are interested in advancing their education and staying in the field.

"It brings a whole element of professionalism to the teachers and to the center," says Lynn Wray, the executive director of Kidworks, a work-site child-care program that serves the employees of Wake Medical Center.

Sitting in her office, next to an airy, uncluttered reception area, Wray could easily boast about the attractive and inviting classrooms or the spacious playground at Kidworks.

Instead, when prospective parents visit her center, housed in a one-story building around the corner from the hospital in Raleigh, she brags about how many of her teachers have college degrees.

"We get excited around here when someone graduates," she says. "We have parties and stuff."

TEACH has also stimulated improvements in North Carolina's community college system. As appealing as the idea of providing scholarships to child-care teachers was, educators and policymakers realized it wouldn't get very far if the courses weren't available.

When the scholarship program began, there were 36 associate's-degree programs for child-care providers in the state. Now there are 44, and more are being added all the time.

The colleges have been forced not only to add courses, but also to offer them when the providers, who are usually full-time working mothers, want them—in the evenings and on weekends. Improvements have also been made in what is known as articulation—allowing the courses that a student takes at the community college level to transfer to a university.

"At UNC-Greensboro, they walk in the door as juniors, and that's really unusual," says the child care workforce center's Vardell.

A new state requirement that all teachers have the credential by March is putting additional pressure on both the community colleges and the TEACH program. Colleges are hiring temporary instructors to keep up with the demand.

It's hard for people to argue with the concept behind TEACH: Higher education

should result in higher pay.

"You can't ask someone to get that degree if it means that they are still going to make less than they would flipping burgers at McDonald's," says Sage Ruckterstuhl, the training director at the New York Child Care Coordinating Council, the advocacy group running TEACH in that state.

But there are aspects of the program that some center owners and directors here have found hard to swallow. Most don't complain about the 10 percent of tuition costs they must contribute. But some do grumble about the condition that they provide released time. TEACH requires centers to give most employees three to six hours of paid leave each week in order to go to school, study for tests, or just to have some free time.

To hold up their end of the bargain, directors have to find substitutes, who are not in great supply, or cover the classrooms themselves.

For three years, TEACH was able to use AmeriCorps volunteers to work in the centers while the teachers were away, but the state opted against renewing the funding for that program.

Directors who are enrolled in TEACH are not required to receive any released time, forcing them to identify a staff member to put in charge and to break away whenever they can.

"There have been times when I just could not leave to go to class," says Anna Hartgrove, the director of Creative Day School in Greensboro and a student in the bachelor's-degree program at that city's UNC campus.

As she grabs another phone call or jumps up from her desk to talk to a parent about some racial comments heard from an after-schooler on the playground, it's clear Hartgrove doesn't have typical days. Hartgrove chuckles. "Sometimes I have to unstop the commodes."

She originally joined the TEACH program just to complete the credential, mainly because she wanted to know what her teachers were being taught. Now, four years later, she has inspired other members of her staff to get their degrees.

As difficult as it is for centers to provide released time, it's even more of a struggle for

family child-care providers.

Margaret Shelton, who has been a provider in Chapel Hill for five years, even relied on the parents of her preschoolers for backup care while she was earning her associate's degree, which she finished in 1996.

"The last two years in school, I wasn't here for six hours a day. I was armed in class with a pager and a cell phone," Shelton says. A sleepy, blond toddler gets comfortable in her lap.

Shelton's center, which she calls Blossoms Home Daycare, occupies four rooms on the



Margaret Shelton relied on her charges' parents to help out in her home-based center while she worked on her associate's degree.

back of her small house. The rooms are well-equipped with books, games, and lots of "play" food for the pretend kitchen.

On one of the walls is a framed picture of her, and several other North Carolina providers, sitting around a table with Gov. James B. Hunt Jr. and Vice President Al Gore. Shelton is one of several providers who have had the opportunity to tell political leaders how they think TEACH is improving the quality of child care.

With another TEACH scholarship, Shelton plans to start on her bachelor's degree next fall. She's not sure how she'll find substitutes while she's in school and making the hour's commute to UNC-Greensboro.

"You feel like you would if you were leaving your own children."

Center teachers, too, sometimes feel guilty for taking off early and sense resentment from co-workers.

"They don't begrudge you the education, but they sort of don't think it's fair," says Ronda Campbell, the Greensboro director working on her degree.

Some supervisors are also reluctant about their employees' getting a higher education, fearing that once these teachers are trained, they'll eventually leave for the public schools.

The 1989 North Carolina study built on a national one conducted a year earlier that brought to light the connection between low wages for workers and low quality in centers. The National Child Care Staffing Study, which focused on 227 child-care centers in five U.S. cities, found that the most important predictor of good care was staff wages.

That report also noted that children who attended centers with high turnover—which is mostly determined by low wages—were “less competent in language and social development.”



TEACH is enabling Ronda Campbell to work toward a degree at Guilford Technical Community College.

An update of the staffing study, done four years later, found that hourly wages for assistant teachers—a fast-growing segment of the workforce—had actually declined since 1988, from \$5.16 to \$5.08. Wages did increase for the highest-paid teachers, who earned almost \$9 per hour, but the 1992 report indicated that most teachers never reach this level.

To make their point, child-care advocates often point to the average hourly wages for workers in other industries to illustrate how little value is placed on those who care for children. According to the latest figures from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, child-care workers make an average of \$6.73 an hour—less than stock clerks, short-order cooks, janitors, manicurists, and parking lot attendants.

The staffing study gave credence to the longstanding laments of child-care workers and their advocates. For two decades, providers throughout the country—through a grassroots effort called the Worthy Wage Campaign—have organized marches, staged child-care-center closings, and sponsored other public-awareness activities to bring attention to the issue.

But still, little has changed, as the newest research will show. Results of that work will be released this spring.

“The significance of TEACH is that it is one of not many projects that puts dollars directly into the pockets of teachers,” says Rosemarie Vardell, the director of organizing and leadership programs for the Washington-based Center for the Child Care Workforce, which produces the staffing study.

Education is far more valuable than experience alone, the North Carolina report also concluded.

“Another year of education could be expected to produce \$493 increase in salary whereas another year of experience in a center would only net \$123 more per year,” the authors wrote.

High-quality child care—and the importance of nurturing settings for young children—has been the focus of many magazine cover stories recently. Under the federal welfare-reform law

that took effect last year, spending on child care has increased, but advocates say little has been done to improve compensation for teachers.

“If we don’t address this, it doesn’t matter what else we do,” argues Sue Russell, the executive director of Day Care Services. “You can have really good ratios with really bad people. Or you have good ratios with people who leave all the time.”

Even when teachers are required by states or their employers to take in-service training, there is little reward waiting for them.

“The saddest thing in the world is to have someone show up with a fistful of training slips, and you have to say to them that’s basically worthless in the job market,” Vardell says.

Since TEACH began in 1990, more than 5,000 providers in North Carolina—including center directors, teachers, and those who operate family child-care programs—have participated. At the least, they earn a North Carolina Child Care Credential, which requires four credits and can usually be completed in two semesters.

But most go after an associate’s degree. And some have even used TEACH to earn a four-year diploma.

Built into the program is a component that automatically reduces staff turnover, because students sign a contract with TEACH and with

their employers to stay at their jobs for a year after they complete school.

But beyond that, turnover among those in an associate’s-degree program has fallen to 10 percent annually, compared with 42 percent statewide.

Those who stay in the program for two years see a 21 percent hike in wages, according to data collected by Day Care Services. After three years, it jumps to 37 percent.

Center directors who participate in TEACH are given a choice: They can either give their employees a bonus or a raise. If they choose the raise, they pay less toward the cost of tuition and books, and TEACH picks up the difference.

“We prefer the raise model because it addresses the real issue,” Russell says. “It’s permanent.”

A small research study, involving 19 TEACH recipients who participated in the first year of the associate’s program, concluded that after taking courses for a year, the teachers’ interaction with the children in their care improved, when compared with those who didn’t go to college.

One of the authors, Deborah J. Cassidy, an associate professor of human development and family studies at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, wrote: “The findings of this study lend further support to the premise that improving teacher educational qualifications is related to improved knowledge of developmentally appropriate practices and higher-quality classrooms.”

What’s more, the 1995 “Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes in Child Care Centers” study, conducted by researchers from four universities, said that the quality of a center increases when staff members get more education.

The experiences of TEACH recipients are personal victories. Women who haven’t been to school in almost 20 years are tackling college math courses, writing terms papers, and sacrificing time with their own children to spend weeknights and Saturday mornings in class.

“My husband is very cooperative,” says Ronda Campbell, a mother of two and the director of a center in Greensboro. She’s spending a Wednesday evening in a course for directors at Guilford Technical Community College in Jamestown. The small-group assignment tonight is to craft a policy for admitting children with special needs into a center, under the American with Disabilities Act.

“I’ve taken as many as four classes at a time, but if it hadn’t been for TEACH, I wouldn’t have taken anything,” says Campbell, who plans to graduate with an associate’s degree this spring.

Because TEACH recipients are nontraditional students with many other responsibilities, Day Care Services also provides the students with a lot of counseling along the way.

Without those services, Tondra Hunter

Thomas Babo

EDUCATION WEEK

American Education's Newspaper of Record

Volume XVII, Number 22 • February 11, 1998

© 1998 Editorial Projects in Education

Learning to Care

A North Carolina program that the White House is plugging rewards child-care workers for going to school.

Chapel Hill, N.C.

Six years ago, when Anna Mercer-McLean became the director of a small child-care center serving poor families here, most of the teachers in the program had no more than a high school education.

Fifty percent of the teachers were leaving every year. And the children, many with special needs, were unmanageable.

"We had children bouncing off the walls because the teachers here didn't have the skills and abilities to work with them," Mercer-McLean says.

Today, Community School for People Under Six, as her nonprofit center is called, is hardly the most beautiful child-care facility in North Carolina's famed "triangle" region. Storage space is at a minimum, and when the weather is rainy or too cold, the children have to drive their riding toys up and down the narrow hallway because there isn't a playroom.

The children are still some of the most challenging to care for. Many have emotional problems. Some have been abused and are living in foster homes. And some are on the verge of becoming homeless.

But for more than a year now, not a single teacher has left the program. And most have earned or are working toward an associate's degree in early-childhood education.

"We made the commitment that we wanted to have educated teachers," Mercer-McLean says, as she enthusiastically accepts a piece of artwork, dripping with paint, from a proud preschooler. "You can see the difference in the children."

What made the difference, Mercer-McLean believes, is TEACH Early Childhood, the statewide scholarship and compensation program that is slowly, but dramatically, improving the careers of those who care for North Carolina's young children.



A program that educates teachers has virtually eliminated employee turnover at Anna Mercer-McLean's child-care center.

The initiative, which went statewide in 1993, is now getting national attention—not just from other states but from the White House as well. The popularity and success of TEACH have inspired President Clinton to include a \$250 million TEACH-like program in his new package of child-care proposals. If approved by Congress, the program would cover 50,000 scholarships a year for five years.

North Carolina's TEACH—which stands for Teacher Education and Compensation Helps—is paid for by a combination of state and federal dollars and grants from private foundations. Totalling \$1.5 million this fiscal year, the program covers most of a child-care employee's tuition costs and books. Upon completion of a year of study, the employee receives a bonus of at least \$100 or a raise in salary.

Created and administered by the Day Care Services Association, a nonprofit

research and advocacy group here, TEACH was the response to a 1989 North Carolina workforce study by the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. It showed that the typical child-care teacher in the state was making only \$4.50 an hour and didn't expect to be working in child care in five years. The report highlighted at the state level the issues that have plagued the child-care field nationwide: Employees are so poorly paid that most don't stay in the business for long, leaving children and programs in a constant state of transition or turmoil.

Those who do get an education and want to work with infants and toddlers often wind up teaching in public schools instead because they can't pay their bills on the salaries they would earn in child care. Landing a job in the public schools, where a new teacher can earn an average salary of \$24,500, would double the income for many center teachers.

Editorials

YEAR OF CHILDREN

Results not in, but trend supports Smart Start

Detractors can complain about how some Smart Start programs have been administered statewide, but they cannot reasonably disagree with what these programs are trying to accomplish.

The state preschool program reports that so far it has improved child-care programs for more than 100,000 children, created 33,500 more slots for children that need day care, reached 60,000 parents with its child-rearing and health classes, and given health screenings for more than 97,000 children.

Ironically, the health screenings, which were one of the more controversial aspects of Smart Start, may soon be among those yielding the first measurable results. Studies have long shown that impaired hearing can affect a child's development, from delaying speech to hindering the ability to read and learn. A new study found that visual impairment also delays development in measurable ways, beginning as young as 12 months. The level of vision impairment that had a marked impact on a child's development was the same for those with and without mental retardation or developmental delay. Catching vision problems early improves a child's readiness for school.

With this evidence in hand, how can health screenings not be seen as crucial to preparing children for school and life?

In Cumberland County, screenings are of-

fered to children in day care centers. Some have benefited from grants for books and equipment, and the library's "Read To Me" program, which is funded through Smart Start. Centers have improved their licensing level, and five have been accredited.

Education for adults, however, may be the Smart Start program with the greatest potential. Child-care workers are being trained. That's the difference between a child having a baby-sitter and having the benefit of a caretaker who understands how to encourage a child's development.

Smart Start isn't a program aimed just at the poor, although there are programs, such as day-care subsidies, that help them. It helps children in day care who are from families across a range of income levels.

But are good intentions enough?

The program, like the group it attempts to help, is young. The hard data simply aren't in to tell how much difference this large investment (\$3.2 million in Cumberland County for the fiscal year) has made. There are hints. The Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center already has found a correlation between the amount of money spent on Smart Start and the amount of improvement shown in the quality of that county's child care centers. The more money spent, and the more centers choose to participate, the better the results.

Based on that trend, the smart money would be on moving forward.

SECOND OPINION

Children helped in their formative years have best chance to become productive adults

To see program at work is to know lives are being improved

In theory, it's hard to argue with Smart Start. The idea is to provide state money for local initiatives aimed at the proper development of pre-school children. The only people who argued against the theory didn't understand the program and believed that the state was usurping the role of parent.

In practice, too much of the publicity has been about missteps in implementing programs. Money embezzled. Lack of private funds. Administrative shortcomings.

Last week, a group went on a tour of some facilities and programs that have benefited from Smart Start money. There is good news to be told.

Smart Start begins at the hospital, although its programs are coordinated to some extent with pre-natal care efforts. There are 5,000 babies born in Forsyth County in a year, 1,500 of them to first-time mothers. A



quarter of them are born to teen-agers. Seventeen percent are poor.

By next year, Smart Start programs expect to reach every one of them with help depending on individual needs. Parenting skills, health care, practical knowledge about infant behavior and follow-through programs that assure mothers of a safety net in a crisis.

It's amazing, when you think about it, that so little has been done about early childhood development in the past, not in any comprehensive way. We know that

80 percent of a child's intellect, social abilities and personality are formed in the first five years of life. Yet we haven't paid much attention to those years, expecting that this development will be adequately overseen by parents.

Raising a child in its formative years is, many would argue, the most important task an adult performs. We have school and training for virtually everything else we might ever undertake. But parenting? Until recently, we've been on our own.

It's not getting any easier. In Forsyth County, almost

two-thirds of mothers with young children work outside their homes. Almost a third of county children live in single-parent homes, and the same percentage, although not necessarily the same children, need remedial help when they start school. Forsyth County day-care facilities have a population of 13,000 children under age 5.

Smart Start, funded initially just two years ago, now has 50 programs focused on early childhood development. It's too early to pronounce the program an unqualified success, but it's not too early to acknowl-

edge that young lives are being improved. Programs are making parents better; day-care facilities are better, and so are their programs and staff. Basic health care is less and less a hit-or-miss proposition. Help is available in the event of crisis.

All the studies are agreed that dollars spent on early childhood development save spending on social programs later. The effects are even more pronounced when early childhood development is followed by effective public education. The war is far from won. But the good guys have improved their strategic position substantially, and look as if they have a chance now.

All of which is abstract and preachy. If you want to see Smart Start at work, you could do worse than pay a visit to St. Phillips Moravian Church, which has conducted a day-care program for more than a generation. It is bright and cheerful. The children sing; they listen to stories; they finger play. They all do, paying attention even when a group of adults disturbs the morning routine. This is clearly not a painful exercise in which they are participating. The smiles and laughter bespeak a good time.

Five years ago, the program focus was on maintaining control of the children, keeping them as well-behaved as possible. Today, the focus is on activities that stimulate and educate. These children will be ready for school.

There are many poignant success stories that the people who run Smart Start would love to tell you. A full inventory of them is well beyond the scope of a single column. But if you think Smart Start is somehow a bad idea, go take a look. Look at the children. Look at their eyes, at the sparkle there. If you are not at least cautiously optimistic after that, go look again. Open your eyes this time.



John Gates

Education leaders praise Smart Start

● National child-rights and education officials laud the N.C. program for promoting an early start to rearing healthy children.

BY EMERY P. DALESIO
The Associated Press

RALEIGH — U.S. Education Secretary Richard Riley and children's advocate Marian Wright Edelman on Tuesday plugged the logic behind their host's signature initiative — Gov. Jim Hunt's Smart Start program.

Riley and Edelman spoke at the Emerging Issues Forum, an annual conference at N.C. State where public policy issues are discussed.

Edelman, founder of the Children's Defense Fund, said Hunt and other education activists were correct that the best way to rear "healthy, educated and moral citizens" is to start early. Because not all parents can accomplish that goal, government must help, she said.

"I think there is something that needs to be scrutinized in the family values of a nation that would rather spend \$10,000, \$15,000 or \$20,000 to lock children up after they've gotten into trouble and

won't give \$3,500 that makes sure they get ready for school," she said.

Hunt told the audience of about 800 that without Smart Start or similar programs, other school reform efforts will be like casting seeds on rocky ground.

"Folks, if we don't help our children have the kind of lives, beginning at the very beginning of their lives, that they need to have to be ready to learn, we will never get there," Hunt said. "I don't care how much you reform schools. I don't care how much money you spend. We will never get there if you don't do the right things early."

Smart Start was proposed by Hunt in 1993 to provide early childhood education, health care and other family services. More than 94,000 children are enrolled in the program.

The state spent \$57.5 million in public funds to operate Smart Start in 32 counties this year.

Hunt plans to ask the General Assembly for \$83.5 million so the program can operate in 44 counties during the 1996-97 school year. Hunt has said he wants Smart Start in the state's 100 counties by 2000.

Riley said the Clinton Administration is taking steps to improve the nation's schools with new ideas, some of which will cost money and some of which will not.

WHO CARES?

DAY CARE IN AMERICA

Day 8: June 9, 1996



The Smart Start program in Cumberland County, N.C., provides teachers with mobile art trunks assembled especially for preschoolers by the Fayetteville Museum of Art. There are folk art, musical instrument and costume trunks.

One state breaks the mold

Smart Start creates new hope for improving day care in North Carolina

FAYETTEVILLE, N.C.

The Church of God of Prophecy's day care center is hardly state of the art.

The rooms in the modest brick building are small, the lighting mostly fluorescent, the furniture plain. The children who go here are the sons and daughters of workers at the local Purolator or Black & Decker plant, without the means to pay high fees.

So when Prophecy's pastor, Steve Gilmer, decided that the center needed some help with improvements, he turned to Smart Start, a nationally praised, state-taxpayer-funded program created to lift North Carolina's children out of the bottom of the statistics heap.

Over the past 18 months, the church's day care center has purchased much-needed playground equipment and a new stove. It has sent

*story by
mackenzie carpenter*

*photographs by
annie o'neill*

two of its teachers to school for associate's degrees in early childhood education, with the promise of salary bonuses if they complete their training.

Doctors and nurses have visited the facility to provide free medical screenings for children, and librarians have come too, bearing free books and expertise on reading techniques and language development.

Gilmer got a better center but in doing so, he lost a couple of parishioners, who were offended

by their conservative Christian pastor's decision to take government money.

He has no regrets.

"I guess you could say we're a fundamentalist-type church getting involved in liberal-type thinking," said the fresh-faced Gilmer, with a chuckle. "But how much involvement will the government have with us? None. Other than health and safety standards, they haven't come in and told us how to do this or that. They leave us alone."

Such is the nature of Smart Start, a \$67 million early childhood initiative that in its two short years of existence has improved training for more than 4,000 child care workers, reduced staff-to-children ratios for infants and toddlers and provided quality improvement grants to nearly 1,000 centers across the state.

It has also spurred unlikely local al-

WHO CARES?

DAY CARE IN AMERICA

Day 8: June 9, 1996



A child at the Church of God of Prophecy day care center in Fayetteville, N.C., tries on one of the masks in the mobile costumes trunk provided by Smart Start.

ances between conservatives and liberals, businessmen and nonprofit groups, believers in big government and advocates of little-to-no government.

The story of Smart Start is instructive for Pennsylvania, and not just because it's a model program that has committed unprecedented amounts of state resources to improve child care. It also shows that, given the right conditions, child care can become a defining gubernatorial campaign issue that galvanizes voters.

A governor's push

Smart, smooth-talking, incredibly popular democrat James Hunt had already built a reputation as a probusiness, anticrime conservative during his first two terms as governor. So when he decided to run for a third term in 1992 — after 10 years in private life — on a child care platform, his opponents could hardly call him a free-spending liberal. Plus, improving day care was an issue that resonated with North Carolina voters.

The state had been rocked in 1989 by child abuse charges at the Little Rascals day care center in Edenton (the defendants were eventually acquitted).

And four years ago, North Carolina's day care facilities were cited by many experts as among the worst in the nation, thanks to weak regulations. Even today, more than half of the directors of the state's day care centers don't have a high school education.

"We are consistently ranked in the bottom quarter in terms of our regulation of child care," said Dick Clifford, a noted child care researcher at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and this year's president of the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

So when Hunt won the election, he made good on his promise, pushing lawmakers to commit some serious money for Smart Start: \$20 million in the first year and \$47 million in the second.

Elsewhere in the nation, states are eligible for small amounts of federal block grant

money to make quality improvements at day care facilities, and some go further in investing new money in child care and education. Hawaii has a plan to create a universal system of early childhood education and care by 2005; Colorado, Ohio and Illinois are also expanding their early childhood programs for low-income children.

But nothing at the moment compares with North Carolina.

It is "without question the most exciting thing going on in the country right now," said Helen Blank, director of child care at the Children's Defense Fund in Washington, D.C.

Has Smart Start improved the quality of child care since it was enacted in 1993?

It's too soon to tell — officially. Preliminary studies by University of North Carolina researchers show that centers using Smart Start money are more likely to be of good quality, but it's not clear whether that's because of Smart Start or whether the centers were good to begin with, and wanted to get

WHO CARES?

DAY CARE IN AMERICA

Day 8: June 9, 1996



Trina Spencer of Trinity Child Care in Fayetteville reads to her class using books provided by the Smart Start-sponsored "Read-to-Me" program. Librarians from the Cumberland County Public Library go to the centers and train teachers in creative storytelling and language development. The centers are allowed to keep the books when their training is complete. Above, a student at Trinity Child Care practices fatherhood duties during play time.



WHO CARES?

DAY CARE IN AMERICA

Day 8: June 9, 1996

better.

More complete data will be available next year to answer that question, said Donna Bryant, director of evaluation for the program at Chapel Hill.

That is, if Smart Start is still alive.

Political uncertainty

The program's future has been in doubt ever since leaders of the first Republican House majority in North Carolina since Reconstruction announced their intention to scale down or eliminate the program.

On its face, Smart Start's philosophy has much that Republicans would seem to admire: local control, public-private partnerships, and most of all, money with few big-government strings attached.

But Raleigh's GOP isn't signing on. Religious conservatives called it "socialized day care" when it was enacted, and many feel it is wrong to use tax money to benefit working parents when households with stay-at-home mothers and a single breadwinner aren't getting any subsidies.

They worry that there is little accountability on how the money is being spent, and that the "public-private partnership" is in fact mostly public.

There have been other problems. In the first year of the program, questions were raised about the purchase of new office furniture in some counties; expensive management consultants; no-bid contracts; and the embezzlement of about \$400,000 in Smart Start money by two subcontractors.

"Republicans are as concerned about children as anybody," said Robin Hayes, House majority leader and gubernatorial hopeful. But, he said, "it is the families' obligation to raise their children, the parents' primary re-

sponsibility, not government's."

Hunt is also using the program to further his own political ambitions — he's running for a fourth term — by awarding new Smart Start grants to "swing" counties during elaborately staged road trips, opponents claim.

Still, business leaders sided with Hunt in the most recent budget battle over Smart Start last summer. When the GOP tacked on a requirement that 20 percent of the money be privately raised, some thought it would be the kiss of death. But Hunt persuaded such corporate giants as NationsBank, Food Lion, Southern National Corp. and Glaxo Wellcome to pledge about \$9.5 million in contributions over 10 years.

The local fund-raising requirement was scaled back to 10 percent, including in-kind contributions, effectively keeping the program alive until the next round of budget negotiations.

The backlash against Smart Start shouldn't be all that surprising, experts say.

"That's the classic cycle" for such programs, said William Gormley of Georgetown University, a political scientist. "First, you give discretion to the recipient government. Then the government makes mistakes, which then spurs an avalanche of criticism, which results in a ratcheting up of restrictions."

"No program has been scrutinized more than Smart Start," said Rosie Bullard, head of Cumberland County's Smart Start program. The very day a reporter visited her office, state auditors were combing through her files. The week before that, the private accounting firm of Coopers and Lybrand had been there. Both audits were done at the Legislature's request.

Despite all the political wrangling,

though, Bullard said there's no turning back the clock to North Carolina's once-dismal reputation for day care.

"Smart Start has forced those of us on the local level to put our differences aside and focus on the consensus that our children deserve to be nurtured in a safe, loving and stimulating environment," Bullard said.

"I think we are on our way to becoming known as a community for children, the way Durham [Duke University] is for medicine," she added with pride.

Linda Rivers, director of Cumberland County's United Cerebral Palsy program and a former preschool teacher, remembers the bad old days all too well, including her stint as the sole caregiver for 16 2- and 3-year-olds.

"In two years I never saw a state inspector," she said with a shudder.

But because of tougher new regulations enacted along with Smart Start, even that has changed. The center's day care "consultant" — the state's official term for inspector — is very much in evidence, not just to enforce rules, but for assistance. "I can pick up the phone and call him and say, 'Hey, I've got this problem with my playground. Am I going to be cited for this?' And he'll come out and help me. Now, there's a *relationship*."

Back at the Church of God of Prophecy, pastor Steve Gilmer also takes the long view.

Unlike some fundamentalist ministers, "I don't preach that day care is Satan," he said.

"What is controlling our lives is the fact that some people must work three to four jobs to make ends meet, and they don't have the luxury of staying home with the kids.

"I simply refuse," he added. "to allow liberal and conservative opinions to divide us."