

2011-2012

PROGRAM EVALUATION REPORT



BUILDING TOMORROW'S
FUTURE
INVESTING IN CHILDREN
NOW



BUILDING TOMORROW'S FUTURE INVESTING IN CHILDREN NOW

Wake County SmartStart works to ensure that children ages birth to five are prepared for success in school and life. This mission truly is about investing in children now to ensure a better future. Such an approach combines thoughtful assessment of community needs, engaging community service providers in a coordinated response, and monitoring to ensure expected outcomes are achieved. WCSS administers and funds programs that transparently steward public funds to serve those in the greatest need. Through this coordination, critical resources are leveraged to support as many children and families as possible.

This report highlights our collaborative efforts in the community, and summarizes our work in key areas.



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THE WAKE COUNTY COMMUNITY

**78,254
children**



**78,254 children,
birth to five,
lived in Wake
County in FY
2011-2012.**

Children

Wake County continues to enjoy strong growth as the second largest county in the state. With 923,677 residents, young children continue to represent a significant segment of the growing population. Approximately 78,254 children, birth to five, reside in Wake County (NC State Demographer). Of those children, approximately 60 percent, younger than six, live in families where the sole parent or both parents are working (Child Care Services Association). With so many families dependent on child care, WCSS provides a critical role in driving quality upward.

While Wake County has a better economic standing than many counties in North Carolina, too many children do without the basic necessities for healthy living. Approximately 40 percent of children birth to five were Medicaid eligible in FY 2011-2012.

Statistics show that the number of children, birth to five, living in poverty in Wake County was 13,502 (American Community Survey). Living in poverty can affect a number of factors including poor nutrition, obesity, cognitive and behavioral development and access to high quality childcare. WCSS is making deliberate efforts to shift factors that impact all children but especially those living in poverty.

4 of 10



**4 out of 10
children in
Wake County
are Medicaid
eligible.**

Child Care

More than 19,630 children, birth to five, were enrolled in regulated child care in Wake County as of June, 2012. That's nearly one in four children. For those children in child care, the cost continued to rise. For many hourly earners, employment and child care are interdependent. Some require subsidy support to afford quality care. Quality makes a difference in how prepared children are for kindergarten.

For every five children in regulated care in Wake County, one is receiving a child care subsidy payment. As of June, 2012, there was a seven percent increase in those receiving support; a total of 3,975 children. The wait list at the end of the fiscal year was over 7,220 children. While those served expanded by seven percent; the wait list expanded by 36 percent. The need is large and growing.

Child care is critical to making employment work. It makes it possible for parents to support their families and live independently. Child Care Subsidy, NC Pre-K, Head Start, employer assistance, tax credits and private grants help some families, but many more are in need. Parents are also more productive knowing their children are in safe, quality learning environments.



Nearly 70% of Wake County children in child care, (ages birth to five) were in high quality programs.



Of 614 licensed child care facilities in Wake County, nearly 60% received a service funded by Wake County SmartStart.

Child Care Facilities

Of the 614 licensed facilities in the county (Child Care Services Association), nearly 60 percent benefited from WCSS services in FY 2011-2012. We provided expertise to those facilities to help increase quality and standards of care. Studies show that a high quality child care program will help children become ready for school which increases their chances to succeed.

Estimates show that the total direct economic impact of early childhood on Wake County's economy was more than \$850 million. Additionally, gross receipts of Wake County's child care industry total more than \$188 million. Of the 614 child care facilities, 334 were centers and 280 were family child care homes. These 614 facilities employed approximately 4,690 people and contributed substantially to the economy as small business owners.

There has been little change in the number of high quality child care facilities (four or five stars) - with more than one of every three facilities rated as high quality. Data shows that the number of very high quality facilities (five stars) has continued to increase. Numbers of five star facilities increased from 2009 to 2012; from 130 to 157. This represents a 34% increase over four years. Research supports that a child's trajectory in life and school can change with high quality early childhood education.

Collaborations

WCSS provides one of the primary hubs of collaboration among partners and providers in Wake County serving young children.

Collaboration ensures resources are used effectively, prevents duplication and expands service capacity. In challenging economic times, collaboration creates more opportunity to solve existing problems and more proactively address emerging issues.

For example, WCSS has worked with others to create a more efficient system for services provided to young children in the home. The need for integrated systems to connect children with services was identified by several community collaborative groups including the Local Interagency Coordinating Council and the Young Child Mental Health Collaborative. After clearly identifying the need, WCSS applied for and received a planning grant from the John Rex Endowment. Funding supports the creation of a system that provides clearer options for parents, and better coordination among the existing service providers.

Fundamentals of collaboration remain the same year after year:

- Engagement, trust & relationship building
- Authenticity based on core values
- Accountability
- Improved Outcomes & Evaluation

Access to high quality child care, safe and supportive home environments, and being prepared for kindergarten are three areas of focus for WCSS. Programs that help young children and their families have been shown to have a positive rate of return on investment. Through this support capable children become capable adults, the foundation of a prosperous and sustainable society.

PROGRAM EVALUATION REPORT

IMPACT: 2011-2012

Research shows that quality early childhood programs and services improve school readiness and raise performance in areas critical to future academic success. WCSS evaluates each program activity to ensure its effectiveness. The program and community impact of these efforts are highlighted below.

GOAL:

Quality Child Care is Accessible and Available

PROGRAM IMPACT:

- **665** families received education regarding high quality child care
- **134** child care facilities increased quality through improved practices, knowledge and teacher education

COMMUNITY IMPACT:

- **71%** of child care providers obtained five teacher education points, an increase from 67% last year
- **37%** of child care providers obtained seven teacher education points, and increase from 31% last year
- **4.11** represented the average child star rating for facilities in Wake County

GOAL:

Children are in High Quality Child Care

PROGRAM IMPACT:

- **1,470** children attend high quality Pre-K programs
- **257** facilities received a child care quality supplement
- **3,865** children impacted by quality supplement

COMMUNITY IMPACT:

- **69%** of all children, birth to five, were in high quality care; an increase from 67% last year
- **79%** of children received child care subsidy in high quality care; an increase from 76% last year

STATS



- **16,210** children in child care facilities served by Wake County SmartStart
- **364** of 614 facilities, approximately 59% received a Wake County SmartStart service
- **230** or 72% of facilities served enrolled children receiving child care subsidy (increase over previous year)

GOAL:

Children are Ready for School

PROGRAM IMPACT:

- **279** children improved School Readiness, Language and Social-Emotional Skills
- **870** families reported that their children were more ready for kindergarten as a result of participation

COMMUNITY IMPACT:

- **65.5%** of kindergarten students receiving free or reduced price meals demonstrated developmentally expected levels of oral language communication on the Kindergarten Initial Assessment.
- **76.7%** of kindergarten students receiving free or reduced price meals demonstrated developmentally expected levels of social interaction with adults and peers on the Kindergarten Initial Assessment.

GOAL:

Children are in Healthy, Safe, Supportive Environments

PROGRAM IMPACT:

- **488** families/children accessed needed services
- **225** parents or families demonstrated improved parenting skills/attitude, or reported improved reading skills/increased reading frequency

COMMUNITY IMPACT:

- **5.8%** of children birth to two received early intervention
- **4.3%** of children three to five received preschool special education services
- **76%** of children enrolled in Medicaid received a well-child exam
- **25.7** of kindergarten students that received free or reduced price meals report reading to their child every day on the Kindergarten Initial Assessment.

STATS



- **3,855** children received direct services
- **3,637** children directly served (94%) met Greatest Need Criteria (based on families income and child's need they had fewer resources than others)
- **10** were activities funded to address school readiness and supportive environments for children

14 PROGRAMS, 10 AGENCIES

JULY 1, 2011- JUNE 30, 2012

When community partners are funded by WCSS, they agree to a rigorous monitoring and evaluation of their activities to ensure effectiveness and good stewardship of public dollars. The information is collected from program and fiscal quarterly reports, annual monitoring reports and evaluations by WCSS. Partners receive mentoring on best practices and are provided technical assistance to achieve their accountability requirements. Supporting community partners is also about sustaining and growing the non profits and agencies we work with collaboratively.



Partner Agencies:

Individual reports for each program funded by WCSS highlight how the program supported WCSS overall goals and mission.

Catholic Charities

- School Readiness Services for Hispanic Children

Child Care Services Association

- Choosing and Using High Quality Child Care Project

Lucy Daniels Center for Early Childhood

- SecurePath (Social/Emotional Interventions for Young Children)

Project Enlightenment (Wake County Public School System)

- Supporting School Readiness
- Parents as Teachers Home Visiting Program

SAFEchild, Inc.

- Crianza con Carino (The Nurturing Program for Spanish Speaking Families)

The Salvation Army

- Project CATCH (Community Action Targeting Children who are Homeless)

Telamon - North Carolina Head Start

- Family Literacy Program

Wake County Human Services

- Child Care Health Consultant Program
- Child Care Subsidy Service
- Nurse Family Partnership

MOTHEREAD, Inc.

- Literacy Invites and Nurtures Kids Success (L.I.N.K.S.)

Wake County SmartStart

- NC Pre-Kindergarten Program
- Program Coordination and Evaluation
- Quality Enhancement Initiative in Child Care Centers and Family Child Care Homes
- Quality Maintenance Initiative in Child Care Centers and Family Child Care Homes

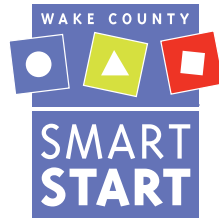
Definitions

These terms apply to all listed programs on the following pages.

Expected greatest needs number equals total actual number children served multiplied by expected target percent.

Under "What impact was achieved?" the expected number equals the number potentially impacted multiplied by expected target percentage. The potential is the number served who received enough services to expect impact and it may be lower than the total number served.

2011-2012 PROGRAM EVALUATION REPORT



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