



2008–2009 ANNUAL REPORT

# INVESTING IN YOUNG CHILDREN, STRENGTHENING OUR COMMUNITY

[www.wakesmartstart.org](http://www.wakesmartstart.org)





## OUR MISSION

Wake County SmartStart works to ensure Wake County's children, birth to 5, are prepared for success in school and in life.

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“Children, tomorrow’s leaders, need quality, supportive, developmentally appropriate care. Wake County SmartStart continues to work hard, with fewer resources, to help children succeed.”

David Zonderman, Ph.D.  
Wake County SmartStart  
Board Chair

## Wake County SmartStart Core Values

Wake County SmartStart is committed to serving our community’s children and families through the following core values:

**Respect:** We honor the unique experiences and needs of each young child and family.

**Cultural Sensitivity:** We value diversity, promote inclusive practice and support community empowerment.

**Advocacy:** We provide a strong, united voice for those most vulnerable—our children.

**Responsiveness:** We respond to the individual needs of children and families with regard for our larger community as a whole.

**Community Collaboration:** We support community collaboration through authentic relationships characterized by honesty, integrity and compassion.

**Innovation:** We value flexibility, actively seek new approaches in practice and regard challenges as opportunities for growth.

**Accountability:** We value our role as public stewards through the use of best business practices, strong internal controls and accurate documentation of our efforts.



**During FY 2008–09, WCSS invested \$23 million in 18 community partners that managed 33 local programs. These programs benefitted approximately 20,000 children, birth to 5. WCSS and its partners worked diligently to achieve results for tomorrow’s adults. Here are three examples:**

- More than 3,000 children in regulated child care received child care subsidy assistance or participated in the More at Four Program.
- Nearly 5,000 children directly benefited from at least one WCSS health and family support activity.
- More than 4,000 child care providers increased their knowledge of quality child care through WCSS funded activities, and more than 900 parents increased their knowledge of quality child care.

## INVESTING IN YOUNG CHILDREN, STRENGTHENING OUR COMMUNITY

### Dear Friends of Young Children,

Anthropologist Margaret Mead once said, “The solution to adult problems tomorrow depends on large measure upon how our children grow up today.” That truth is more evident today than ever before, especially during the difficult economic conditions that accompanied fiscal year 2008–2009.

Tremendous demographic shifts have occurred in Wake County over the past 13 years, since the inception of Wake County SmartStart (WCSS). As the number of children under 5 continues to climb, there is a corresponding increase in the need for services. WCSS adapts by identifying, evaluating and implementing new strategies. Children, tomorrow’s leaders, need quality, supportive, developmentally appropriate care. WCSS continues to work hard, with fewer resources, to help children succeed in school and life.

During FY 2008–09, WCSS faced difficult decisions as its budget was reduced by 7.4%—a cut affecting all of its partners and the families they serve. Despite these cuts, WCSS continued to fund early childhood services in education, social/emotional intervention and family support.

As we look ahead, we know that funding remains uncertain and additional budget cuts are anticipated. We also know that research shows that funding early childhood programs is the best way to maximize taxpayers’ investments in education. WCSS and its volunteers continue to advocate on behalf of the county’s children and work with legislators, as well as the community, to bring attention to the importance of appropriately-funded, high-quality early childhood programs that start at birth.

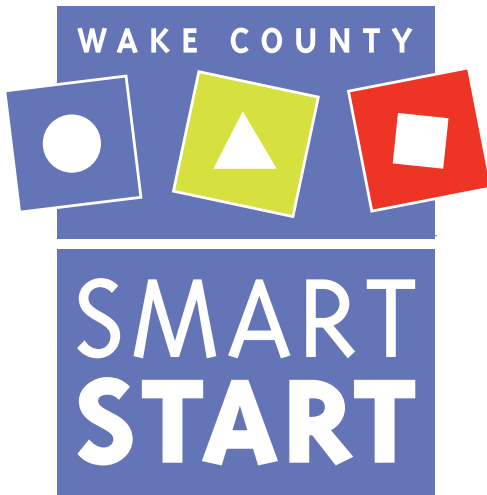
In the pages that follow, we invite you to read more about our accomplishments over the past year. Take a moment to learn more about area families and local child care providers. The contents of the report demonstrate our passion for funding programs that make a significant impact on families.

Thank you for your continued support of WCSS and for your help ensuring that today’s children grow up to be contributing, successful adults.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "David Zonderman".

David Zonderman, Ph.D.  
Wake County SmartStart Board Chair



## WAKE COUNTY FAST FACTS

- With an estimated population of 900,066 in 2008, Wake County is the most populous county in North Carolina.
- Over 31% of all elementary school students were eligible for free or reduced lunch in 2008.
- One of every three children, birth to 5, in Wake County (almost 26,000 children) was Medicaid-eligible in 2008. This represents an increase of 13% over last year.
- Slightly more than one of every four children, birth to 5, is in regulated child care.
- The average monthly cost of high quality care ranges from \$793 for 4-year-olds to \$1,127 for infants. This represents an increase of roughly 3% over last year.

# PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## AN OVERVIEW

**SINCE 1996**, WAKE COUNTY SMARTSTART (WCSS) has led the local effort to address the challenges facing young children, their families and early childhood educators. The organization coordinates and funds programs that make a dramatic difference in individual lives and have significant long-term benefits to our community. Each year, WCSS serves thousands of children and their families, child care providers and child care facilities. The organization collaborates with local experts, as well as parents and community leaders, to review and design activities for young children. WCSS then monitors the results. Without WCSS's early care and education activities, Wake County would lack a comprehensive system that works to ensure that young children are prepared for success in school and life.

Statewide research shows that Smart Start has resulted in higher quality child care programs and that children participating in these programs have better outcomes in cognitive, language and social skills. Long-term, high-quality early childhood programs positively affect children's success in school, graduation rates, and community involvement and earnings as adults. When we invest in a child during the first five years, that child is less likely to require special education, drop out of school, be confined in juvenile detention, depend on welfare benefits or commit crime. The investment we make in our children now makes a difference for a lifetime.

WCSS is a responsible steward of tax dollars, investing wisely in local programs. The organization's assistance to and oversight of partner agencies maximizes the effectiveness of public dollars. WCSS places great emphasis on accountability, to which the organization's track record of clean audits attests. Moreover, community agencies are able to leverage additional dollars as a result of trainings and support from WCSS.

**To accomplish the mission of working to ensure that Wake County children, birth to 5, are prepared for success in school and in life, WCSS prioritizes community needs and funds projects that support three primary goals:**

- 1. Quality child care is accessible and available.**
- 2. Children are safe and healthy and live in supportive environments.**
- 3. Children are ready for kindergarten.**

**In fiscal year 2008-09, WCSS provided funding to 18 agencies that implemented 33 activities to support these three goals.**



### Additional Accomplishments, Goal 1:

- More than one of every four children in child care benefited from child care subsidies during FY 2008–09.
- The number of child care facilities with a five star rating, the highest quality rating possible, increased by 27% over the previous fiscal year.
- WCSS served more than two of every three regulated child care facilities in Wake County. The goals of the activities included enhancing the knowledge and skills of child care professionals and improving child care environments. Some facilities received support directly related to improving their quality through technical assistance and professional development. Others benefited from specific consultation in the areas of child health and development. Four activities specifically addressed the social/emotional needs of children in child care.



## Meeting WCSS Goal One: QUALITY CHILD CARE IS ACCESSIBLE AND AVAILABLE

### Primary services provided in this goal area were:

- 3,055 children received subsidy or participated in the More at Four Program.
- 42 centers or homes increased or maintained their star license rating.
- 200 teachers earned three or more credit hours in Early Childhood Education.
- 4,067 child care providers increased knowledge of quality child care.
- 933 parents increased knowledge of quality child care.

### SUCCESS STORY

Ellie, a toddler, was diagnosed with Selective Mutism. In class, she never spoke and sat quietly during circle time with her head down. Her teachers used basic sign language or whispered to communicate with her. After a time in a quality supportive school environment, to the excitement of her teacher, Ellie began to whisper. Her mother cried with happiness when Ellie's teachers first told her that her daughter had begun to speak. Ellie now regularly whispers to her teachers and friends and appears more comfortable and confident at school.

Activity: More at Four  
Agency: WCSS

### SUCCESS STORY

Wake County Public Libraries Bookmobile staff help numerous preschool teachers incorporate early literacy skills into their structured daily activities through the use of "story kits." In addition to providing the kits, bookmobile staff conduct workshops at the centers on how to use them to address six essential elements of early literacy. Teachers' comments include the following: "This is a wonderful kit and full of very useful items. It really helped to add to our curriculum." "My class really enjoys the kits. They provide great materials that we do not have in the center." "The kids have loved the flannel boards, books and puppets."

Activity: Stories Together  
Agency: Wake Co. Public Libraries Bookmobile Services to Young Children



### Additional Accomplishments, Goal 1:

- The average facility star rating was 3.78 out of 5, exceeding the High Performing Standard set by the North Carolina Partnership for Children (NCPC).
- The percentage of children in four and five star facilities was 62%, exceeding the High Performing Standard set by NCPC.
- The percentage of children receiving a subsidy who were enrolled in regulated child care programs was 100%, exceeding the High Performing Standard set by NCPC.

## SUCCESS STORY



A single mother that spoke little English called the Child Care Services Association, because she needed to find quality child care so that she could obtain a job. Through the Choosing and Using High Quality Child Care Project, the mother received valuable information about the Star-Rated License and quality indicators. One of the organization's bilingual family support counselors also referred her to the Wake County Human Services Child Care Unit to learn more about subsidy assistance. She applied and was soon approved to receive a child care subsidy. Today, the mother reports that she is very appreciative that her daughter is receiving high quality care while she works. Now, she can earn an income to support her family, while her daughter learns necessary skills that will help her to be successful in school and life.

Activity: Choosing and Using High Quality Child Care Project  
Agency: Child Care Services Association



## Meeting WCSS Goal Two:

CHILDREN ARE SAFE AND HEALTHY AND LIVE IN SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS

### Primary services provided in this goal area were:

- 137 children received Early Intervention services as a result of activity referral or support.
- 157 children received preventive medical care as a result of activity referral or support.
- 187 families reported an increase in literacy activities to at least four times per week.
- 323 parents increased knowledge of child development or school readiness.

## SUCCESS STORY



A young mother with two small children, ages 3 and 1, moved into the Salvation Army shelter for women and children a few months ago. This young mom embraced many dreams, both for herself and her kids. For her kids, she wanted the basic things that all children deserve—food, clothing, shelter, love and stability. She also wanted quality child care, medical care and the resources to provide for her kids. For herself, she wanted employment, housing and schooling. This mom took advantage of the support that was offered to her by the Salvation Army, with



### Additional Accomplishments, Goal 2:

- In FY 2008–09, WCSS funded 21 different programs that provided direct services to children and families.
- 1,090 children received developmental or speech/language screenings.
- 383 children were impacted by activities that improved family literacy.
- 76% of children participating in a WCSS-funded program used primary healthcare (Health Check).

funding from WCSS. She was able to place her children in child care, so that she could work and go to school. She received access to quality medical care and her children were given developmental screenings. This young mom is now employed and working toward her GED.

Activity: Family Outreach and Resource Services  
Agency: The Salvation Army

### SUCCESS STORY

Motheread/Fatheread classes have made a big difference in the literacy skills of the two young sons in the Cruz family. Mother Alejandra says, “We never used to share books as a family like we’re doing now. Everybody really enjoys reading the books I bring home [from Motheread class] each week.” Alejandra now regularly reads books to her sons and talks to them about the messages they contain. Her husband, Mario, has also become involved in the process. “He never read to our older son when he was young,” says Alejandra. “Now he reads regularly to Ivan, our 4-year-old.” Ivan’s vocabulary has improved, and he is “very excited about having books that are his own.” With WCSS funding for the Motheread/Fatheread project, this family developed family reading time, a key component of school readiness.

Activity: Motheread/Fatheread  
Agency: Motheread, Inc.

### SUCCESS STORY

Project LIFT offers literacy and parenting skills training and support for parents and their children birth to 5. One family provided an example of the dramatic improvement possible in a parent’s interaction with her children as a result of the project. When the mother first began LIFT classes, she sat apart from her children and completed her own craft project. When she did engage with her children during an art activity, she tended to complete the activity for them, rather than assist them as they worked. The project staff led by example, and over the weeks, a shift in the interactions between mother and her children occurred. She began to sit closer to them and show interest in their work. She stood behind them and assisted them with their own cutting and pasting. These actions demonstrated that this mom was learning how to engage her children in the developmentally appropriate learning activities that are the building blocks for their future intellectual and emotional growth.

Activity: Project LIFT (Literacy Instruction for Families Together)  
Agency: Literacy Council of Wake County



### Additional Accomplishments, Goal 3:

- 4,972 children directly benefited from at least one WCSS activity. (Note: This figure includes children benefiting primarily from health and family support activities but does not include children benefiting from child care quality enhancement, child care subsidy or early care and education activities.)
- WCSS' services target those with limited financial resources—defined as children with “greatest needs” by the WCSS Board of Directors. In FY 2008–09, WCSS served 4,024 children meeting greatest needs criteria; this is 81% of the total number of children the organization served. This figure represents a 19% increase over the past 5 years.

## 3

### Meeting WCSS Goal Three:

CHILDREN ARE READY FOR KINDERGARTEN

Primary services provided in this goal area were:

- 369 children were served through activities that promoted healthy child social/emotional development.
- 205 children with special needs or challenging behaviors maintained a stable child care setting.
- 37 children increased their oral language skills.

### SUCCESS STORY



Maddie is 4 years old and lives with her parents and 2-year-old sister. When the SecurePath therapist met her, she spoke only a handful of words and no sentences. She had daily, violent tantrums that lasted over an hour, bit and hit her younger sister and isolated herself instead of playing with other children and her caregivers. After six months of weekly family therapy, Maddie's parents were able to communicate more effectively with her and help her through her difficult feelings. The therapist also helped Maddie's teachers develop and implement strategies to improve her behavior. The therapist worked with the child individually to teach her healthy ways to express and manage her often overwhelming emotions. Maddie gained the ability to function in a classroom setting and began kindergarten.

Activity: Social/Emotional Interventions for Young Children—Secure Path Agency: Lucy Daniels Center for Early Childhood





### Additional Accomplishments, Goal 3:

- 69% of families participating in a WCSS-funded program increased literacy activities with their children.
- 652 children benefited from home visiting services.
- 2 children demonstrated improvement in behaviors associated with school readiness

## SUCCESS STORY

On an ongoing basis, WCSS staff work with direct service providers to develop annual plans to evaluate their services and assess progress. The organization also provides technical assistance to help providers address challenges, improve programs, and reach their goals. Through a committee and work groups, the organization's evaluation department developed low- and no-cost strategies to enhance the community's ability to support young children and families. Furthermore, the evaluation department coordinated the development of a needs assessment for an Early Head Start grant proposal. The successful proposal resulted in significant additional resources for FY 2009–10.

Activity: Program Improvement and Evaluation  
Agency: WCSS

## SUCCESS STORY

The Telamon Corporation Family Literacy Program serves children who are 3 or 4 years old and are not in child care. Using the dialogic reading method, staff help children increase their vocabulary and reading skills. Two examples of children who benefited from this program are Luis and Dio, four-year-old twins who were not fluent in English. Their mother had tried to teach them English while retaining their native language of Spanish. Staff provided language instruction to the twins with their mother's interpretation assistance. The mom and teacher worked together to help the boys identify items in written material and name the items in English. The children's English skills progressed quickly, helping to ensure that they were well-prepared to enter kindergarten.

Activity: Telamon Corporation Family Literacy Program  
Agency: Telamon Corporation



# COLLABORATING TO SUPPORT YOUNG CHILDREN & THEIR FAMILIES

## WCSS' CORE VALUES INCLUDE COMMUNITY COLLABORATION:

*We support community collaboration through authentic relationships characterized by honesty, integrity and compassion.*

In FY 2008–09, WCSS worked closely with numerous community groups to address the unmet needs of children, with particular attention paid to the social and emotional needs of young children.



**WCSS partners** with numerous community organizations, healthcare providers, parents and educators to ensure the well-being of Wake County's children, birth to 5. WCSS maximizes the benefits of limited community resources through these collaborative partnerships. The organization also coordinates efforts to devote resources to early childhood education and addresses systemic barriers to help ensure that the greatest number of children are served.

In February 2009, WCSS-funded partner Telamon Head Start learned that Early Head Start program expansion opportunities were available locally. After a series of community meetings, focus groups and surveys, Telamon Head Start concluded it would be in the best interest of the community to bring an Early Head Start Program to Wake County. The grant application process began. WCSS played a vital role in this process and provided the community needs assessment for the application. Other community partners included the Maternal Outreach Worker program, Children's Developmental Services Agencies, Child Service Coordination program, child welfare workers and Work First Case Managers. Over time, the Early Head Start grant was approved, and an additional 198 infants/toddlers and pregnant women will be served through the program.

In January 2009, WCSS sponsored The Devereux Early Childhood Initiative (DECI) in Wake County; WCSS underwrote all registration costs for Wake County participants. This one-day event introduced participants to the evidenced-based Devereux model and emphasized the protective factors that the model targets for social-emotional health in children birth to 5. Workshop participants explored the value of continuous assessment and the creation of plans for use in the classroom and home. The

workshop was open to childcare teachers and directors, psychologists, social workers, counselors, early intervention specialists and child service coordinators. Continuing education units were offered to all eligible participants.

Through its work with the Local Interagency Coordinating Council (LICC), WCSS developed a community presentation that addresses services for children, birth to 5, who are at risk for developmental delays. The presentation provides an overview of services available to a wide range of children, highlights programs that target children with special needs and outlines the pre-kindergarten universal application process. LICC's goal for FY 2009–10 is to make a minimum of 20 community presentations to child care providers, More at Four classrooms, pediatricians, clinics, universities and community colleges to increase awareness of the services available to children.

As a member of the Young Children's Mental Health Collaborative (YCMHC), WCSS is active in bringing the mental health gaps and barriers in services for young children to the attention of state representatives. Rep. Verla Insko, receptive to YCMHC's position, agreed to contact the Institute of Medicine (IOM) to request a study that would include recommendations for a statewide system of care for young children. Prior to the meeting at the IOM, YCMHC determined the scope and outcome for the study; identified the target population, issues and gaps in services; and listed steps for meeting the needs of the population. YCMHC presented its finding to the legislature in the fall of 2009.

The collaborative spirit and commitment exhibited by WCSS and its many community partners has contributed to North Carolina's recognition as a leader in early childhood education.

# 2008–09 Financial Statements

Wake County SmartStart, Inc. Statement of Receipts, Expenditures and Net Assets—Modified Cash Basis (Unaudited)

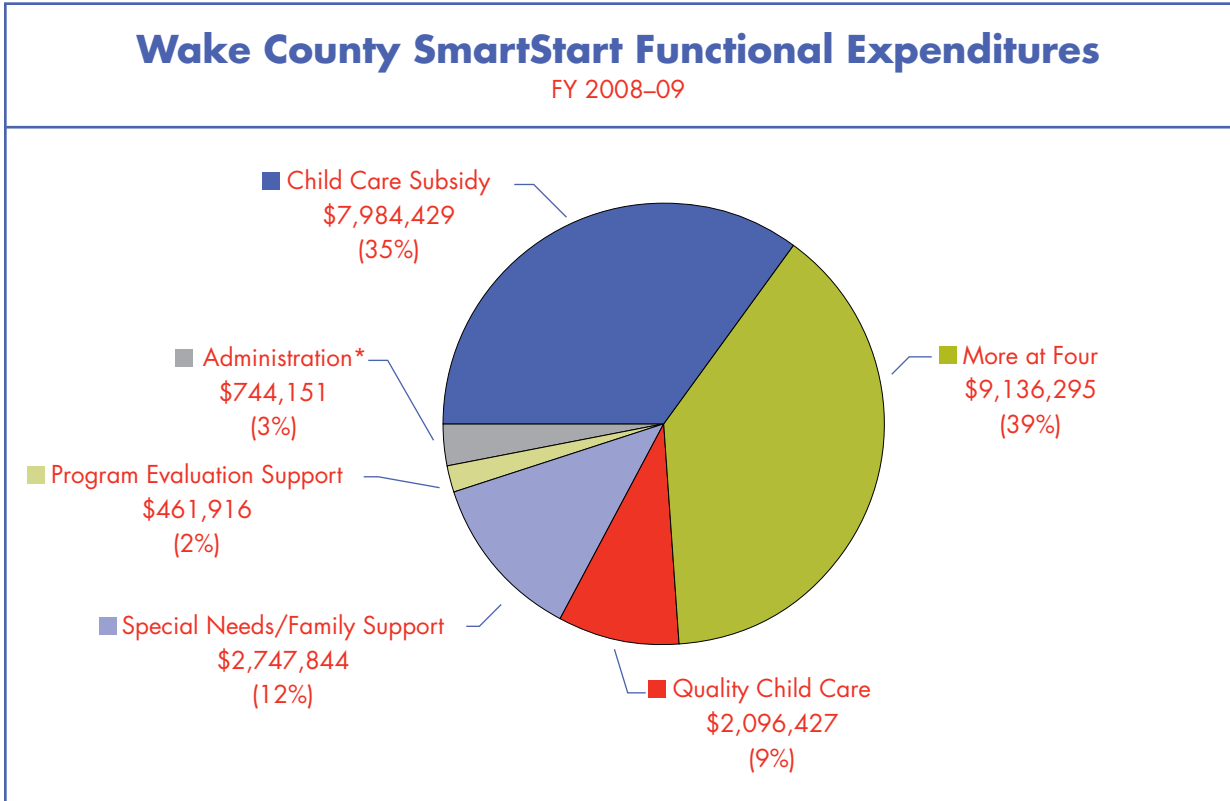
	Unrestricted Funds Smart Start Funds	Other Funds	Temporarily Restricted Funds	Total Funds
<b>Receipts:</b>				
State Awards (less refunds of \$1,127)	\$7,716,541	6,515,781		\$14,232,322
Private Contributions		29,513	5,000	34,513
Interest and Investment Earnings		9,708		9,708
Sales Tax Refunds		16,622		16,622
Other Receipts		19,633		19,633
	7,716,541	6,591,257	5,000	14,312,798
<b>Expenditures:</b>				
Programs:				
Child Care and Education Quality	1,145,335	1,092		1,146,427
Family Support	1,751,950			1,751,950
Health and Safety	971,010	24,884		995,894
More at Four	2,863,830	6,272,465		9,136,295
Support:				
Management and General	522,589	201,916		724,505
Program Coordination and Evaluation	461,827	89		461,916
Other:				
Sales Tax Paid		19,646		19,646
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	7,716,541	6,520,092		14,236,633
<b>Excess of Receipts Over Expenditures</b>		71,165	5,000	76,165
<b>Net Assets at Beginning of Year</b>		658,081		658,081
<b>Net Assets at End of Year</b>		729,246	5,000	\$734,246
<b>Net Assets Consisted of:</b>				
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$6,832	729,246	5,000	\$741,078
Refunds Due From Contractors	32,742			32,742
	39,574	729,246	5,000	773,820
Less: Due to State	36,135			36,135
Funds Held for Others	3,439			3,439
		729,246	5,000	\$734,246

## Schedule of State Level Service Providers Contracts For the Year Ended June 30, 2009

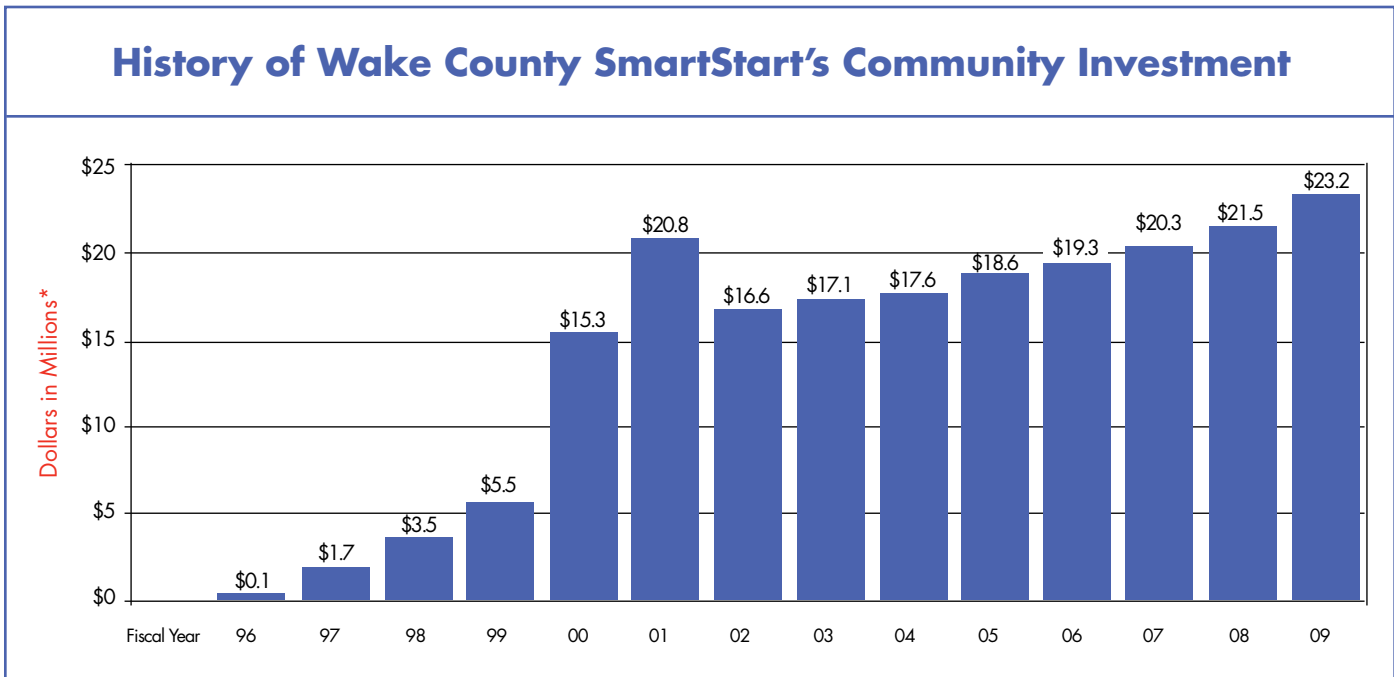
Child Care Services Association WAGE\$	\$950,000
Wake County Human Services Child Care Subsidy	7,984,429
Total State Level Contracts	\$ 8,934,429
Total Expenditures—	
Wake County SmartStart (See above.)	\$14,236,633
Grand Total Expenditures by and through Wake County SmartStart	<u>\$ 23,171,062</u>

Note: During FY 2008–09, the NC Partnership for Children and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) entered into contracts with and made payments to service providers selected by Wake County SmartStart. These service provider contracts are not reflected on this statement. See left, however, for a summary of the service provider contracts entered on behalf of Wake County SmartStart.

# 2008-09 Financial Statements (continued)



Please note: Percentages have been rounded.  
 \*Administration includes sales tax paid.



\*Figures are rounded to the nearest one hundred thousand dollars.

# Partners & Their Programs

## CATHOLIC CHARITIES

- School Readiness Services for Hispanic Children

## CHILD CARE SERVICES ASSOCIATION

- Choosing and Using High Quality Child Care Project
- Professional Development Planning for Child Care Providers
- Child Care WAGE\$ Project

## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS, INC.

- Inclusion Resource Project (IRP)

## LEARNING TOGETHER

- BEST Buddiez

## LITERACY COUNCIL OF WAKE COUNTY

- Project LIFT

## LUCY DANIELS CENTER FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD

- Social/Emotional Interventions for Young Children: SecurePath

## LUTHERAN FAMILY SERVICES IN THE CAROLINAS

- Parent-Child Home Program

## MOTHEREAD, INC.

- Literacy Invites and Nurtures Kids' Success (L.I.N.K.S.)
- Motherread/Fatherread

## PROJECT ENLIGHTENMENT

- Outreach for School Success: Parents as Teachers Home Visiting Program
- Child Screening, Referral and Support Program
- Consultation and Support for Child Care Providers
- Supporting School Readiness

## SAFECHILD, INC.

- Crianza Con Cariño

## TELAMON CORPORATION

- Family Literacy Program

## THE SALVATION ARMY

- Family Outreach and Resource Services

## WAKE COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES

- Child Care Health Consultant Program: Healthy Start I
- Child Care Subsidy Service
- Child Health Outreach Worker (CHOW)
- Enriching Families, Nurturing Children
- Nurse Family Partnership

## WAKE COUNTY SMARTSTART

- More at Four Prekindergarten Program
- Program Improvement and Evaluation
- Program Coordination and Community Capacity Building Project
- Quality Enhancement Initiative in Child Care Centers and Family Child Care Homes
- Quality Maintenance Initiative in Child Care Centers and Family Child Care Homes

## WAKE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARIES

- Stories Together

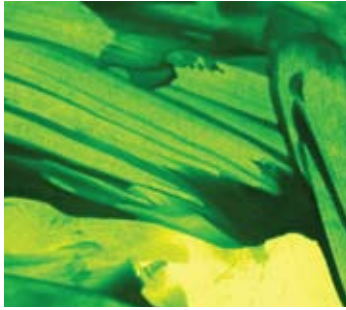
## WAKE MED

- Hospital-Home Intervention Program

## WAKE TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

- Early Childhood Education Faculty (07/01/08–12/31/08)





## Thank You to the 2008-09 Volunteers and Donors

Natasha Adwaters  
 Mary Ellen Anderson  
 Paul Anderson  
 Ivan Azamar  
 Krista Barbour  
 Nell Barnes  
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 Kaplan Early  
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 United Way of  
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Liz Ziglar

(AS OF JUNE 2009)

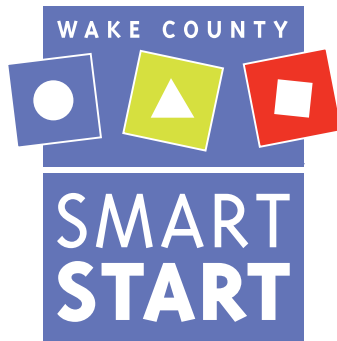
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**Wake County SmartStart**

1121 Situs Court, Suite 250  
Raleigh, NC 27606

919.851.9550 phone

919.851.9530 fax

**[www.wakesmartstart.org](http://www.wakesmartstart.org)**

