



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
PHOTOS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

November 11, 2008

More at Four Classroom Extends Educational Experience to East Wake High School Senior

Five star rated ABC Land of Wendell, in sixth year of More at Four collaboration with Wake County SmartStart, partners with local high school

RALEIGH, NC – In an outstanding example of public-private partnership, ABC Land of Wendell, in its Wake County SmartStart-supported More at Four classroom, has created an environment where learning extends beyond the 4-year-old age group for which the program is designed. As part of his high school curriculum, East Wake High School senior and Wendell resident Juan Rodriguez is completing an internship in a More at Four classroom at ABC Land. Through the internship, Rodriguez works six hours a week in the child care center, creates lesson plans which reflect the curriculum, teaches, and participates in any activities a child care professional would oversee. In this classroom, Rodriguez learns as much as his young charges. Rodriguez balances the demands of his internship with a full course load at school, and athletic activities which include football, wrestling and track.

While ABC Land has worked with East Wake High School's internship program for over 20 years, ABC Land founder and owner Lorraine Dixon admits she has seen few males participate in the early childhood internship. When asked what prompted his decision to intern at a child care center, Rodriguez explains that, as a sophomore, he "took a child development class and found it fascinating." Rodriguez enjoyed the class so much he signed up for Early Childhood Education I, through which he was required to complete an internship in a local child care center. "Taking care of children is both very rewarding and very challenging. Seeing the children laugh, learn and play is very fulfilling. Through this experience I see I have a gift, and I would consider early childhood education as a college major."

ABC Land has been in operation for 30 years, and its partnership with More at Four dates back six years. "Wake County SmartStart approached me in 2002 about opening up a More at Four classroom in Wendell. ABC Land was the only five-star rated child care center in Wendell, and Wake County SmartStart was looking for additional high-quality classrooms for Wake County's More at Four program," explains ABC Land founder and owner Lorraine Dixon. "In 2003, I enrolled 18 children in my first More at Four classroom, and six years later I have three More at Four classrooms with a total of 54 children."

Wake County SmartStart is a non-profit organization that works to ensure every child in Wake County, birth to 5, is prepared for success in school and life. Wake County SmartStart has been the administrator for the More at Four program in Wake County since 2001-02. For more information about Wake County SmartStart, its partners or its projects, visit www.wakesmartstart.org or call (919) 851-9550.

###

Contacts:

Elizabeth Santana, Quality Enhancement Initiative Director, (919) 851-9550, Ext. 1601
Marie Maguire, Communications Director, (919) 851-9550, Ext. 1102