



Head Start
Telamon Corporation



Human Services



WAKE COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 26, 2009

WAKE COUNTY SMARTSTART TO BEGIN PROCESSING APPLICATIONS FOR WAKE COUNTY'S FOUR PUBLICLY-FUNDED PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS *County programs facilitate families' access to high-quality preschool for at-risk children*

Raleigh, NC -- Beginning February 3, 2009, Wake County SmartStart will be accepting and processing [applications](#) for Wake County's four publicly-funded preschool programs: Telamon Corporation's Head Start, Wake County Human Services' Child Subsidy, Wake County Public Schools' Title One, and Wake County SmartStart's More at Four. As a result of this countywide collaboration, families interested in preschool programs for their children complete only one application and are considered for all four preschool programs. While there is some flexibility in the deadline by which applications should be completed, parents are encouraged to submit their applications by April 15, 2009 to ensure optimal placement.

The four programs for which children can be considered are:

- Head Start, the nation's premier early childhood and health program, which is a comprehensive school readiness program that helps to reduce the achievement gap in the classroom. Head Start targets children ages 3 to 5-years old, and families qualify based on income guidelines;
- Child Care Subsidy, through which eligible families receive financial assistance for their child care needs. The child care subsidy is based on an assessment of need, income and family size. While children are not placed in a preschool through this program, a case manager may assist families in finding a school that meets the needs of the child;
- More at Four, administered by Wake County SmartStart, which is a no cost pre-kindergarten program. To qualify for the program, Wake County families must meet income guidelines, provide transportation to and from the school, and children must be 4-years-old on or before August 31, 2009; and
- Wake County Public Schools' Title One, through which 4-year-olds indentified as being at risk for school failure participate in a preschool program where academic growth in a developmentally appropriate manner is encouraged. Children are considered eligible if a delay is demonstrated by performance on a developmental screening instrument.

“Wake County SmartStart recognizes it can, at times, be overwhelming for families to navigate the system. As such, we have collaborated with these three groups that, like Wake County SmartStart, respond to the needs of families with young children so that we may more effectively serve them,” explained Debi Bartholomew, Wake County More at Four Manager. “After the application is reviewed for eligibility, we begin the process of matching the family to the program which most closely meets its needs. Our intention was to remove some of the frustration of having to access more than one agency, and we are hopeful we have succeeded in doing so.”

Wake County SmartStart will host information and application sessions throughout February and March 2009 at locations across Wake County. A complete list of pre-kindergarten information and application sessions can be found on the Wake County SmartStart Web site; the list is available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#). As part of the application process, families must provide a copy of the child’s birth certificate, proof of residence in Wake County (utility bill, lease or mortgage contract), and proof of annual income (tax forms, two check stubs indicating hourly wage and number of hours worked). For more information about the pre-k application, go to www.wakesmartstart.org/prek.php or call 851-9550 ext. 1408.

As a local partnership with the North Carolina Partnership for Children, **Wake County SmartStart** works with national, state and local agencies and other nonprofits that serve Wake County’s children, birth to 5, and their families. Wake County SmartStart works to improve the quality, accessibility and affordability of child care settings, identify and connect children to early intervention and other preventive health services and support families in a variety of ways. The organization also promotes, supports, and advocates for the needs of young children living in Wake County. To obtain more information on Wake County SmartStart’s allocation of state funds and its activities with local partner agencies, visit www.wakesmartstart.org.

#

Contact:

Debi Bartholomew, More at Four Manager, dbartholomew@wakesmartstart.org, (919) 851-9550
Taty Padilla, More at Four Community Outreach Assistant, tpadilla@wakesmartstart.org, (919) 851-9550
Marie Maguire, Communications Director, mmaguire@wakesmartstart.org, (919) 851-9550