



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# News Release

October 8, 2009

---

## Wake County SmartStart Board of Directors Introduces Measures in Response to 2009-10 State Budget Reduction

*Cuts will impact Wake County's families with children*

RALEIGH, N.C. – In response to the State of North Carolina's announcement concerning reduced funding for Fiscal Year 2009-10, the Wake County SmartStart (WCSS) Board of Directors has introduced a series of cost-cutting measures. The measures were introduced in response to a current budget of 11% less than the previous year's budget. Regrettably, the size of the budget cut has the potential to erode progress Wake County SmartStart and its partners have made in the areas of early care and intervention, social-emotional intervention, family support, and teacher professional development and salary supplements which directly impact the quality of child care.

"Last fiscal year, Wake County SmartStart was asked to revert 7.4% of its budget. As with all decisions the organization makes, we took the stand that first, it was imperative Wake County's children feel the least impact from any budgets cuts, and second, we would ask nothing of our funded partners our organization was not willing to do itself," explained Board Chair David Zonderman, PhD. "And while we used this same approach with the organization's 2009-10 budget, because of the severity of the budget cuts, tragically, our county's children and families will undoubtedly have access to reduced services."

Because the budget reduction comes at a time when the need for services is increasing due to the declining economy, more families will compete for fewer services which are critical to a child's healthy development. The cuts have the potential to affect Wake County's most vulnerable children. Lydia, born prematurely, may lose the support she and her family receive, support which allows Lydia's family to understand and address her developmental needs, thus allowing her to thrive. Sam, the 2-year-old whose parents do not speak English, risks losing the support of literacy trainers who help his family learn to read to their children. In order for Sam to develop pre-literacy skills which prepare him to learn to read, it is important that his parents learn to read to him. Madison, whose working parents qualify for subsidy assistance, risks losing the subsidy payment which allows her to attend childcare as opposed to receiving patchwork care from friends or neighbors. Four-year-old Tim who acts inappropriately with others may lose the intervention necessary to develop healthy social and emotional skills. The development of these skills has been identified as essential to success in school. Examples such as these indicate how, at a community level, state budget cuts trickle down to affect our children.

Wake County SmartStart is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to ensure every child in Wake County, birth to 5, is prepared for success in school and life. Created in 1996, Wake County SmartStart works to improve the quality, accessibility and affordability of child care settings, provide preventive health and early intervention services and offer family support services. The organization also promotes, supports, and advocates for the needs of young children living in Wake County. For more information about Wake County SmartStart, its partners and projects, visit [www.wakesmartstart.org](http://www.wakesmartstart.org) or call (919) 851-9550.

###

**Contact:**

Pam Dowdy, Executive Director, (919) 851-9550, Ext. 1101

1121 Situs Court, Suite 250, Raleigh, NC 27606 ||919.851.9550 ||919.851.9530 FAX  
||[www.wakesmartstart.org](http://www.wakesmartstart.org)