



News Release

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Wake County SmartStart Visits North Carolina General Assembly to Ask Wake County Legislators to “Hold the Line” on Investments in Young Children

Raleigh (June 10, 2010) – On Tuesday, June 8, child advocates, child care professionals, parents and business leaders from Wake County visited the North Carolina General Assembly as part of Smart Start’s statewide “Tuesdays for Tots” initiative. The constituents met with the Wake County legislative delegation and asked members to “hold the line” and continue to invest in young children in Wake County. Earlier this year, more than 800 community leaders from across the state voted that access to quality early education and care was a top priority for young children.

“Wake County SmartStart is committed to ensuring that all local children have access to early education and health services to help them succeed in school and in life,” said Pam Dowdy, executive director, Wake County SmartStart. “However, while the challenges facing local families continue to grow, the funding that allows Smart Start to serve families is in jeopardy. Tuesday for Tots meetings are to help our legislators better understand the needs in our community and to ask that they ‘hold the line’ and continue to invest in young children and our state through Smart Start. Today’s children are North Carolina’s future leaders, parents and workers. Our state’s prosperity depends on their healthy development and growth.”

Tuesdays for Tots is Smart Start’s signature effort that takes place during the legislative session. On Tuesdays, advocates representing Smart Start’s 77 partnerships come to Raleigh for one-on-one meetings to educate lawmakers on the challenges facing young families and how Smart Start meets these critical needs.

Smart Start is North Carolina’s early childhood initiative. For the past 16 years, it has been a recognized as a national model in helping ensure that young children enter school healthy and ready to succeed. Smart Start is a public-private initiative that provides early education and care funding to all of North Carolina’s 100 counties. Smart Start funds are administered at the local level through nonprofit organizations called Local Partnerships. The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc., (NCPC) is the statewide nonprofit organization that provides oversight and technical assistance for local partnerships.

Smart Start has experienced funding reductions over the past 9 years of \$43.8 million. This amounts to a loss of \$101.2 million when combined with the effects of inflation. These cuts are occurring at the same time that economists and other business leaders are advocating that investments in young children are one of the strongest investments not only for the short term but also for sustained growth and job creation. In fact, the North Carolina General Assembly’s Legislative Study Commission on Children and

Youth concluded: "It is critical to ensure the healthy development of children in the State and improve outcomes for all children in order to ensure the future success of our State and our citizens."

More than 25 residents traveling to the North Carolina General Assembly to meet with the following members of the Wake County legislative delegation: Representative Marilyn Avila, Representative Nelson Dollar, Representative Rosa Gill, Representative Chris Heagarty, Representative Darren Jackson, Representative Grier Martin, Representative Deborah Ross, Representative Paul Stam, Representative Jennifer Weiss, Senator Dan Blue, Senator Neal Hunt, Senator Josh Stein and Senator Richard Stevens. Pictures available at the Wake County SmartStart Facebook page, [here](#).

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About Wake County SmartStart

Organized in 1996, Wake County SmartStart is committed to ensuring every child in Wake County is prepared to enter school healthy and ready to succeed. 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 and early childhood educators. The organization also promotes, supports, and advocates for the needs of young children living in Wake County. To achieve its mission of building the capacity of families and the community to prepare children for success in school and in life, Wake County SmartStart partners with national, state, and local agencies, and other nonprofits that serve Wake County children, ages birth to five, and their families through vital human service programs. More information on Wake County SmartStart's allocation of state funds and its activities with local partner agencies can be found at www.wakesmartstart.org.

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