



## INTRODUCTION

Wake County SmartStart, (hereinafter referred to as "WCSS") is soliciting proposals for the provision of early childhood educational materials and furniture. WCSS is the not-for-profit grantee for Smart Start in Wake County, North Carolina. Smart Start is a comprehensive initiative designed to provide every child in North Carolina access to affordable, high quality early childhood education, health care and family support services. The initiative is focused on children from birth to age 5 to ensure they come to school healthy and prepared for success.

## EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS AND FURNITURE

Quotes are solicited for a comprehensive list of early childhood educational materials and furniture. The following is a general list of requirements of prospective Contractors.

1. Qualified Contractors must be able to provide a comprehensive selection of goods that includes the following types of items at a minimum:
  - a. Infant furniture such as cribs, changing tables, high chairs, multi-child strollers;
  - b. Toddler furniture such as tables, chairs, shelves, cubbies, cots;
  - c. Dramatic play items such as pretend kitchen appliances, dishes, doll houses and furniture, multi-cultural doll sets and discovery boxes;
  - d. Sand and water tables and related items;
  - e. Manipulatives such as puzzles, pegs and peg boards, blocks, simple help frames (button, zip, tie);
  - f. Block play items;
  - g. Art items such as paint, easels, brushes, crayons, smocks;
  - h. Early literacy language items;
  - i. Music items such as rhythm instruments; and
  - j. Active play items such as tricycles, wagons, balls.
2. Qualified Contractors must provide a hard-copy catalog.
3. Qualified Contractors must provide catalogs that may be accessed from the Contractor's own web site on the Internet. This site shall provide browsing capability plus "shopping cart" pick list, pricing, and on-line ordering directly from the Internet. The site must also list a net unit price for each item offered.

Orders may be placed throughout the contract period on an as-needed basis for the quantities required at the time.

**The Partnership may decide to share these proposals and/or the results of the evaluation with other child care-related entities. Please provide a "yes" or "no" response on the check list as to whether or not your Company would honor these prices for our funding agencies, other local Smart Start partnerships, and our subcontractors and grantees, including child care centers.**

## THE PROCUREMENT PROCESS

The following is a general description of the process by which prospective Contractors will be selected to provide services.

1. Request for Proposals (RFP) is issued to prospective Contractors.
2. Proposals in one original and one copy must be received from each Contractor in a sealed envelope or package. Each original shall be signed and dated by an official authorized to bind the firm. Unsigned proposals will **not** be considered.
3. All proposals must be received by WCSS no later than the date and time specified on the cover sheet of this RFP. Proposals received subsequent to this date and time will **not** be considered.
4. All proposals must be complete and include all required information. Incomplete proposals will **not** be considered.
5. At their option, the evaluators may request oral presentations or discussion with any or all Contractors for the purpose of clarification or to amplify the materials presented in any part of the proposal. However, Contractors are cautioned that the evaluators are not required to request clarification; therefore, **all proposals should be complete and reflect the most favorable terms available from the Contractor.**
6. Proposals will be evaluated according to comprehensiveness of product selection, price, quality, reputation for service and performance, warranty provisions, guaranteed delivery schedule and financial stability of the prospective Contractor. Proposals from more than one prospective Contractor may be selected, and a multi-year contract period may or may not be utilized.
7. Contractors are cautioned that this is a request for offers, not a request to contract, and WCSS reserves the unqualified right to reject any and all offers when such rejection is deemed to be in the best interest of WCSS.

## PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

The response to this RFP shall consist of the following sections: 1) Bidder's Checklist; 2) Cover Letter; 3) References; 4) Cost Proposal; 5) Hard Copy Catalog; and 6) Audited or Reviewed Financial Statements.

1. Bidder's Checklist

The Bidder's Checklist included herein as Attachment A must be included as the proposal cover page.

## 2. Cover Letter

Each proposal must include a cover letter, signed and dated by an individual authorized to legally bind the Contractor.

The cover letter must contain a statement that the person signing the proposal is a legal representative of the Contractor and is authorized to bind the Contractor.

The cover letter must also contain a certification that:

- 1) The bid is submitted competitively and without collusion;
- 2) None of the officers or directors have been convicted of any violations of Chapter 78A of the North Carolina General Statutes, the Securities Act of 1933, or the Securities Exchange Act of 1934; and
- 3) The business has no overdue tax debts, as defined by North Carolina General Statute 105-243.1.

## 3. References

Prospective Contractors must submit the entity and contact names, addresses, and phone numbers of no fewer than three "high-volume" references. "High volume" is defined as those organizations for which the prospective Contractor furnished goods of \$25,000 or more within a one-year period.

## 4. Cost Proposal

The Cost Proposal must contain the following information:

- 1) Item number, detailed product description, retail price for each item;
- 2) Percent discount from retail;
- 3) Shipping method to be used and amount of shipping charges, if any;
- 4) Restocking charges, if any;
- 5) Payment terms;
- 6) Any products/items to which the discount from retail does not apply (i.e., exclusions);
- 7) Quantity discount;
- 8) Warranty provisions;
- 9) Provision of teacher packing; and
- 10) Time of delivery.

## 5. Hard Copy Catalog

A current hard copy catalog must be provided.

## 6. Audited or Reviewed Financial Statements

Current (i.e., issued within the most recent 18 months) audited or reviewed financial statements and related reports must be provided. Compiled or unaudited financial statements will **not** fulfill this requirement.