



WAKE COUNTY



Smart Start



Building Bright Futures Together

2024-2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Letter from the Board Chair



Dear Wake County Smart Start Friends and Partners,

There is a profound significance to the number 2,000. It represents the brief, weighty window of a child's first days—a period as fleeting as it is foundational. As I reflect upon the 2024-2025 fiscal year, I find myself returning to the concept of stewardship. To be a steward is to hold something fragile in trust; it is the quiet, persistent labor of protecting a future that we may never fully inhabit ourselves, but which depends entirely upon our current devotion. In a sector often defined by shifting uncertainty, WCSS has remained steadfast. We have narrowed our gaze to what is truly meaningful, anchored by the conviction that our mission is a solemn responsibility. We have operated with a calculated calm, navigating change by remaining caretakers of the essential, always prepared to pivot without losing sight of the families who rely on us.

In a year marked by growing need and uncertainty, Wake County Smart Start remained focused on what matters most—ensuring children and families could access meaningful support when it matters most. Across Wake County, our investments helped 2,911 children and 748 parents and caregivers, strengthened 297 early learning facilities, and helped more than 27,000 children build home libraries through free books. These numbers reflect more than reach; they represent trust, partnership, and impact.

Being a good steward also means being adaptive. This year, we worked to remove barriers and bring services closer to families—whether through expanding access to high-quality NC Pre-K and Wake ThreeSchool classrooms, delivering health screenings directly to Pre-K students by partnering with Advance Community

Health, or supporting families through home visiting and family navigation programs that meet them where they are. When families face challenges navigating complex systems, proximity matters—and we are committed to staying close.

We know this work cannot happen in isolation. Collaboration remains central to our approach. This year, Wake County Smart Start partnered with Wake County Cooperative Extension and the Center for Environmental Farming Systems to pilot innovative efforts like the Local Foods Early Childhood Education Market. Through events like our community Block Party, where nearly 1,850 children and families connected with 39 partner agencies, we continued building relationships that make systems more accessible and welcoming.

Challenges remain. Funding remains constrained even as needs grow more complex and far-reaching. Families deserve more support; systems are stretching thin, and the work ahead will not be easy. But this year has made one truth undeniable: when we invest in children early, stand shoulder to shoulder with our partners, and listen closely to the communities we serve, progress is possible and powerful.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you for your partnership, your trust, and your shared commitment to Wake County's youngest children. Your support makes this work possible, and together, we are helping ensure every child enters school—and life—ready to thrive.

Warmly,

Katherine Williams

Board Chair, Wake County Smart Start Board Chair

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Investing in
Young Children,
Families and a
Brighter Future
Together

About Us

For nearly thirty years, Wake County Smart Start (WCSS) has stood at the heart of early childhood progress in Wake County—a trusted leader committed to giving every child the strongest possible start. Established in 1993 as part of North Carolina's Smart Start network, we exist because the earliest years of life shape everything that follows: learning, health, relationships, and opportunity.

WCSS is dedicated to ensuring every child enters kindergarten ready for success. We provide early education programs, expand access to quality child care, fund local organizations, and connect families to essential resources. But our impact extends far beyond program delivery. As community-centric leaders, WCSS brings together educators, healthcare providers, early intervention specialists, and family-serving organizations to build a comprehensive and coordinated system of support for young children and those who care for them.

OUR VISION

We envision a bright, prosperous future for Wake County where all young children are happy, healthy and able to reach their full potential.

OUR MISSION

To invest in young children, their families, and a connected early childhood system that supports and prepares them for school and life ahead.

Every day, we move closer to this future—one child, one family, and one partnership at a time.



Why We Do What We Do

Thousands of families—over 6,000 young children—live at or below the poverty line in Wake County, facing barriers to high-quality early learning, stable care, and developmental support during the years that matter most. When children enter kindergarten unprepared, the effects ripple far beyond the classroom. Their long-term learning, future earning potential, and overall well-being are impacted. The community bears the cost of lost opportunities and an uneven workforce pipeline.

These challenges are preventable. Decades of research show that the earliest years are when brains build the foundation for everything that follows: curiosity, confidence, problem-solving, empathy, and resilience. Wake County Smart Start is the only organization in Wake County focused exclusively on early childhood education and development, making us the community's go-to resource for building the foundation of the workforce pipeline. Our work ensures that Wake County's youngest learners are not overlooked.

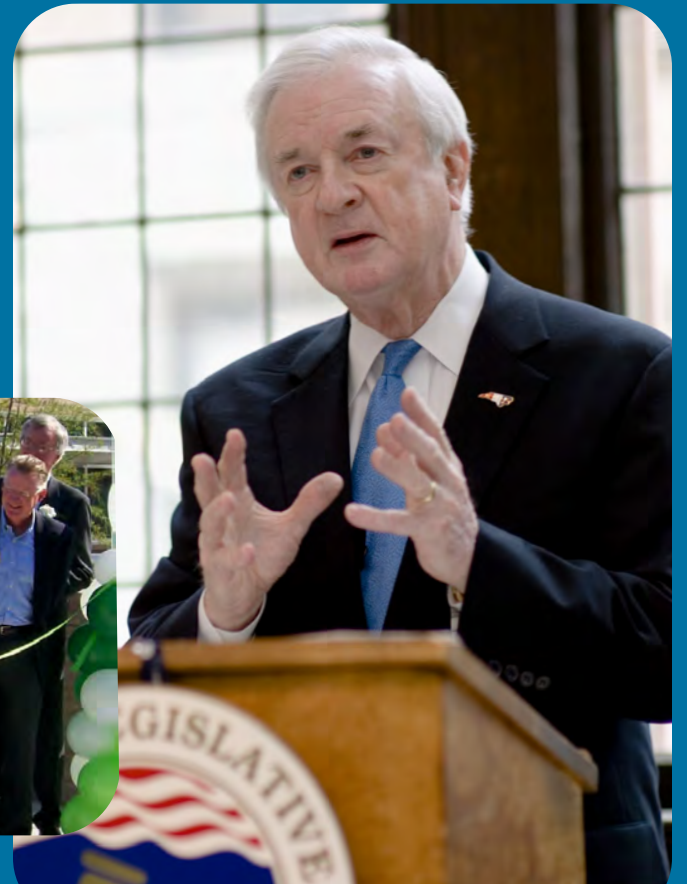


Honoring the Legacy of Governor James B. Hunt, Jr.

Former Governor James B. Hunt, Jr.'s leadership fundamentally strengthened early childhood education in North Carolina, reshaping how our state invests in young children and families.

More than 25 years ago, Gov. Hunt responded to a clear and urgent need: a stronger, more equitable early childhood system that ensured every child entered school healthy and ready to learn. Guided by that conviction, he launched Smart Start, an innovative statewide model that brought together public and private partners to build coordinated early learning systems rooted in community needs. The Wake County Smart Start partnership was born from this bold idea and continues to reflect his commitment to children's well-being.

Today, his legacy is visible in the thousands of children who access early learning programs, in the families who find support when they need it most, and in the educators and community organizations working together to create brighter futures. His leadership continues to inspire our mission, our partnerships, and our commitment to ensuring all Wake County children enter school healthy, prepared, and ready to succeed.



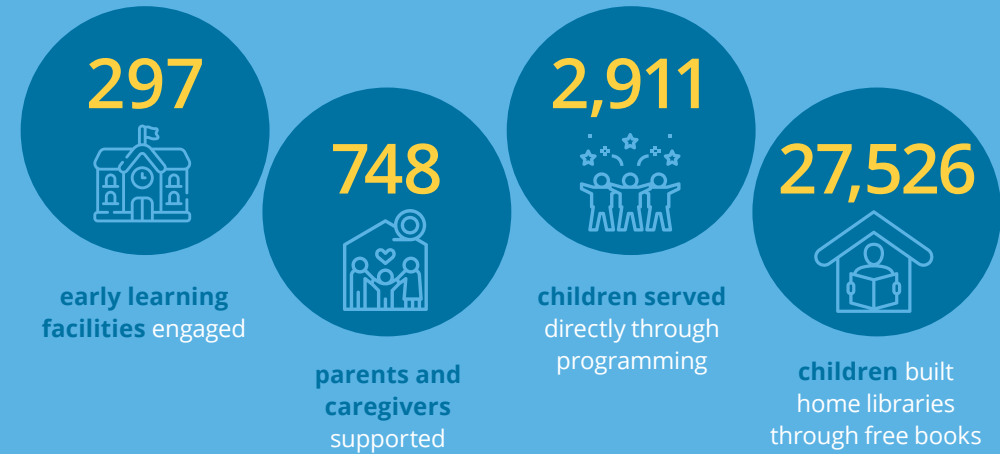
In memory of Gov. Hunt — a champion for children, a visionary leader, and the architect of Smart Start — Wake County Smart Start remains steadfast in advancing the work he began.

2024-25 At a Glance

During the 2024–2025 fiscal year, WCSS investments supported young children and families across Wake County through both direct programming and community-wide systems efforts.



OUR REACH THIS YEAR



EARLY LEARNING & PRE-K ACCESS

1,705 four-year-olds gained access to high-quality NC Pre-K classrooms in **65** facilities.

333 three-year-olds participated in **Wake ThreeSchool** across **19** locations, building early academic, social, and emotional skills.



FAMILY SUPPORT & HOME VISITING

Our family support network continued to be a vital resource for families navigating child development, parenting challenges, and early learning needs:

215 children and **281** parents partnered with **Parents as Teachers (PAT)** for developmental screenings, home visits, and family education.

Crianza con Cariño and Fiesta Family Services supported **121** children and **107** caregivers, strengthening parenting confidence and family connection.

School Readiness Services for Hispanic Children supported **142** children and **112** caregivers, strengthening language and literacy.

HIPPY supported **63** children and **56** parents with weekly home-based learning.

Nurse Family Partnership supported **41** first-time mothers, helping them build healthy, nurturing beginnings.

HEALTH & SAFETY SUPPORTS

Child Care Health Consultants served **250** facilities, helping create safer, healthier environments for young children.

Lucy Daniels Center's in-home therapy **SecurePath** served **78** children and **66** parents through mental health assessments and therapy.



Together, these investments helped families feel supported, helped children thrive, and strengthened the early childhood ecosystem across Wake County.

SYSTEMS NAVIGATION & PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The Systems Improvement and Public Engagement (SIPE) team strengthened countywide access to resources:

572 linkages made for family support and home visiting programs, and community resources

334,375 free books delivered through **Dolly Parton's Imagination Library**

Over **1,850** children and their families attended the **Wake County Smart Start Block Party**.

39 partner agencies shared resources and **111** volunteers helped to make it a special day for families.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

Local Foods Early Childhood Education (ECE) Market Pilot (Early Childhood Initiatives)

Among our most exciting efforts, the Local Foods ECE Market Pilot broadened access to fresh, local foods, creating healthier habits, nurturing stronger learning spaces, and inspiring curiosity through new tastes and textures.



WHAT THE PROGRAM DOES

In partnership with Wake County Cooperative Extension and the Center for Environmental Farming Systems, this initiative helps early childhood programs order and serve fresh local produce through farm stands, food hubs, and curated delivery boxes.

2024-2025 IMPACT

- 15 family child care homes and 3 child care centers participated
- Approximately 430 children benefited from fresh, healthy foods integrated into daily routines
- Providers strengthened skills in meal planning, storage, food preparation, and nutrition education

Programs reported children eagerly awaiting fresh food deliveries, exploring new fruits and vegetables, and engaging in gardening and cooking activities. The pilot not only nourished children, it strengthened provider confidence, family engagement, and community partnerships.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

Pre-K

Pre-K standout efforts we're excited to share are our work to strengthen the NC Pre-K system by expanding health access and increasing high-quality classroom opportunities, so children begin school healthy, confident, and ready to thrive.



ADVANCE COMMUNITY HEALTH PARTNERSHIP

Through a new partnership with Advance Community Health, WCSS brought physical health services directly to NC Pre-K students by hosting free health assessments at the WCSS office. This effort removed transportation barriers and helped families access care in a familiar, trusted environment.



2024-2025 IMPACT

At the same time, the NC Pre-K Site Selection Subcommittee—made up of early childhood experts from across the community—reviewed program applications and identified where new classrooms could have the greatest impact for the 2025–2026 school year.

Strengthening Health Access

- 10 children received comprehensive physical health screenings
- Families avoided transportation challenges by receiving care on-site at WCSS
- Children entered Pre-K better prepared for learning, participation, and early developmental milestones

Expanding High-Quality Pre-K Capacity

- 23 total applicants reviewed by the Site Selection Subcommittee
- 9 new NC Pre-K sites approved for 2025–2026
- Capacity regained to serve 999 children in private Pre-K sites
- Public school Pre-K capacity expanded to 407 children

CLASSROOM IMPACT

These system-level improvements created meaningful change in real classrooms:

- A child who began the year speaking only Spanish entered kindergarten confidently and communicates in both Spanish and English—thanks to intentional, culturally responsive support.
- Another child, once overwhelmed by big emotions, learned to use solution cards to self-regulate and seek help appropriately.
- At Frankie Lemmon, staff provided critical emotional support to a child navigating difficult circumstances at home—offering stability during an unstable period.



These efforts improved both health and access, paving the way for more children to enter kindergarten classrooms ready to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

Wake ThreeSchool Social Emotional Learning Presentation at the 2025 Board Retreat

Wake ThreeSchool presented on social-emotional learning (SEL)—the essential skills children rely on to understand their emotions, form healthy relationships, and navigate life’s challenges—during the WCSS Board of Directors’ annual retreat. The presentation deepened the Board’s understanding of the critical SEL needs of our youngest learners, strengthened alignment with WCSS’s strategic priorities, and reinforced the urgency of bold, system-level action.

WHAT THE PROGRAM DOES

This session helped Board members gain a clear, shared understanding of SEL and why it is essential to child development. Staff walked the Board through what SEL entails, how it shapes brain development and learning, and why strong SEL foundations are critical for long-term academic, social, and economic outcomes.

To ground this in real-world context, WTS staff presented classroom observations showing increased emotional dysregulation and challenging behaviors among students. They also shared application data illustrating a rising number of children entering the program with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or identified developmental needs—highlighting growing complexity in the population served.



2024-2025 IMPACT

Elevating Classroom Realities

- WTS staff shared concrete examples of SEL challenges observed across classrooms, illustrating both the frequency and intensity of children’s emotional needs.
- Case study analysis shed light on contributing factors—including program structure, teacher capacity, and limited access to immediate external services.

Deepening Board Engagement

- Board members worked in small groups to analyze the case study from the perspectives of the child, family, teacher, site administrator, and broader community.
- The activity sparked rich dialogue and gave the Board a clearer picture of how SEL challenges affect every layer of the early childhood ecosystem.

Grounding the Work in Research and Equity

- Staff introduced research on implicit bias in preschool discipline, emphasizing how exclusionary practices disproportionately affect certain groups of children.
- The discussion reinforced the importance of addressing SEL through a child-centered systems approach.



Board members walked away with a deeper appreciation for the urgency of supporting SEL at a systems level and how this focus directly advances WCSS’s strategic priorities. The conversation also strengthened alignment with county-wide goals around behavioral health, lifelong learning, and economic mobility.

IMPACT STORY

BABY STEPS/LITTLE STEPS, STEPUP MINISTRY

Baby Steps/Little Steps follows an age-appropriate curriculum that enables children to develop the life skills needed to start school, such as social skills, fine/gross motor skills, and early literacy. Parents and young adults concurrently receive a mix of individualized case management and 1:1 mentorship and parental coaching. Activity uses the evidence-based Triple P (Positive Parenting Program) to help parents learn to build relationships that encourage lasting behavior change.



Ana's Journey

A Mother's Determination, A Family's Transformation

Ana Clemente came to StepUp Ministry with a vision: to build a better life for herself and her three children—Gael (9), Logan (6), and Emma (1). Two of her children have autism, and Ana faced enormous challenges advocating for the support and accommodations they needed in school.

Through StepUp's Baby Steps/Little Steps, Ana found not only tools and resources, but a community that walked alongside her. She returned to school, strengthened her confidence, and fought tirelessly for her children's educational needs.

With support from StepUp's Baby Steps/Little Steps program manager and the collaborative advocacy from WCSS-connected partners, Ana's children's voices were heard, and their needs were met once they began accessing the services they deserved. Ana's resilience and unwavering love became the foundation for her family's growth. Her journey shows the power of connection—and what becomes possible when courage meets opportunity.

COURAGE MEETS OPPORTUNITY



IMPACT STORY

PRE-K, WAKE COUNTY SMART START

The North Carolina Pre-Kindergarten Program is an early learning opportunity for eligible four-year-olds. This program provides a comprehensive approach to preparing children for school success by addressing children's cognitive, social, emotional, language and physical needs in structured, quality classroom environments.



Blossoming in a New Language

A Preschooler Finds Her Voice

When a young girl from a Spanish-speaking family entered a preschool classroom for the first time, everything felt unfamiliar. She was quiet, nervous, and hesitant to separate from her mother.

Her story is a reminder that culturally responsive classrooms don't just support learning—they help children bloom.

But her teachers created a welcoming bridge—using Spanish greetings, songs, and familiar words to ease her transition. They honored her home language and gave her space to explore at her own pace.

Within weeks, she transformed.

She walked into class with confidence.

She made friends.

She played, laughed, learned colors and patterns, and talked excitedly with her mother about her day.



BUILDING CONFIDENCE FOR SCHOOL SUCCESS

IMPACT STORY

PARENTS AS TEACHERS, WAKE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM OFFICE OF EARLY LEARNING

Parents as Teachers (PAT) is an international early childhood parent education and family support program serving families throughout pregnancy until their child enters kindergarten, usually age five. The program is designed to enhance child development and school achievement through parent education. Interactions include: personal visits, group meetings, annual developmental screenings and functional assessments and referrals to community resources to families on an as needed basis.



A Family's Strength and PAT's Support Shine Through

At five months old, Zoe failed her newborn hearing screening. Over time, her mother noticed developmental changes and sought help through Parents as Teachers (PAT) and referral partners.

With hearing aids, early intervention, developmental screenings, and unwavering parental involvement, Zoe made meaningful progress. Her mother embraced every strategy PAT offered—engaging in activities, observing milestones, and partnering closely with Raleigh Children's Developmental Services Agency (CDSA) and NC Beginnings.

When Zoe began to fall behind again, her mother continued advocating, securing play therapy and additional support. On the day of a supervisory visit, Zoe proudly demonstrated her growth—following routines, responding to prompts, engaging in activities, and communicating in new ways.

Zoe's story is a testament to a mother's love, the power of early intervention, and the promise of home visiting programs.



ADVOCACY FOR EARLY INTERVENTION AND GROWTH

IMPACT STORY

SYSTEMS IMPROVEMENT AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT (SIPE), WAKE COUNTY SMART START

Provides an array of activities to community stakeholders including a) resource sharing, b) community outreach, c) service integration, d) building capacity for development of shared goals across community partners. Stakeholders are targeted through individual and group outreach efforts and represent families with young children, community leaders, service delivery representatives and policymakers.



A Conversation That Opened a Door *A Father Finds the Right Start*

The Systems Improvement and Public Engagement (SIPE) team meets families where they are—at community centers, parks, faith gatherings, festivals—because navigating early learning systems can be overwhelming.

One day, a simple hello led to a life-changing connection.

SIPE met James, a father of four seeking a structured learning environment for his three-year-old son, Marcus. Through warm, thoughtful conversation, they explored options together and identified Wake ThreeSchool as a strong fit.

Within a few months of enrollment, James saw Marcus blossom in the classroom and in daily routines at home.

He now encourages other families to explore these opportunities: "Any family considering the program, I would say that the program provides valuable learning experience for kids."

One friendly hello led to the right program at the right time, proving that when information is accessible and support is local, children and families can take the next step with courage and clarity.



Any family considering the program, I would say that the program provides valuable learning experience for kids.

—James

Community Collaboratives & Coalitions



We are grateful for the many partners who work alongside us to strengthen early childhood systems. Across our teams, we participate in a wide range of collaboratives and coalitions that help ensure children and families receive coordinated, community-driven support. These partnerships allow us to listen, share expertise, align efforts, and move further together than any one organization could alone.

ECI COLLABORATIVES

- Wake County Technical Assistance Collaborative (TAC)
- Wake County Cooperative Extension*
- Center for Environmental Farming Systems (CEFS)*
- Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina*
- Natural Learning Initiative (NLI)*
- Wake County Health Consultants

* Healthy Initiatives



SIPE COLLABORATIVES

- Alianza Latina Pro-Educación en Salud (ALPES)
- Crosby Garfield Community Advocacy Group
- Departure Drive Community Advocacy Group
- Dorcas Ministries Board of Directors
- Early Literacy Outreach (ELO) - Peer Networking
- Wake Connections Advisory Committee
- Wake LICC (Local Interagency Coordinating Council)
- Wake County Health and Human Services Social Services Committee
- Western Wake Community Advocacy Group
- WAKE Up and Read – School Readiness Subcommittee

WAKE THREESCHOOL COLLABORATIVES

- Advance Community Health Partnership
- Childcare Subsidy
- Early Years
- Partners in Inclusion Advisory Committee
- Shaw University Psychology Department
- Teaching Strategies
- Technical Assistance Collaborative
- Wake County Director's Meeting
- Wake ThreeSchool Advisory Committee

PRE-K

- Community Cares Collaborative
- Pre-K Site Selection Sub Committee
- Transition to Kindergarten Leadership Committee
- Wake Pre-K Application Collaborative
- Wake Pre-K Outreach Collaborative
- Wake County Collaborative for Children and Families



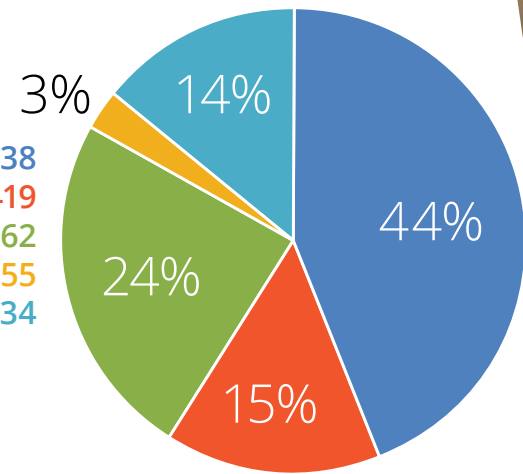
Financial Summary

WAKE COUNTY SMART START REVENUE FY 24/25

TOTAL \$32,554,608*

*Includes \$4,672,034 of pass-through funds, Child Care Subsidy

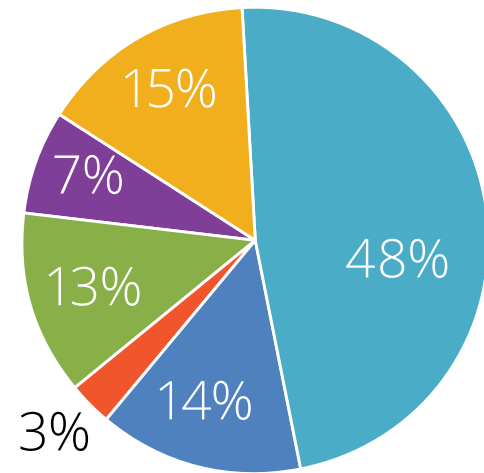
State Awards and Contracts	\$14,382,938
Federal Awards	\$4,918,419
Local Awards.....	\$7,751,562
Private Contributions and Interest.....	\$829,655
Smart Start funds, Child Care Subsidy.....	\$4,672,034
<i>(through Wake County Human Services)</i>	



WAKE COUNTY SMART START FUNCTIONAL EXPENDITURES FY 24/25

TOTAL \$31,795,324

NC Pre-Kindergarten.....	\$15,299,359
Wake ThreeSchool	\$4,541,902
Child Care and Education Quality	\$1,035,116
Family Support/Health and Safety	\$4,208,572
Program Support	\$2,038,341
Child Care Subsidy.....	\$4,672,034
<i>(through Wake County Human Services)</i>	



Donors

INDIVIDUALS

Alejandra Livas-Dlott
 Alma Livas
 Amanda Andresen
 André Anthony
 Anita Lauro
 Anita Sawhney
 Ann Marie Dlott
 Antonia Pedroza
 Ariel Ford
 Barbara Morales Burke
 Beverly Sherwood
 Bobbie Holland
 Bradley Erickson
 Camille Schaffer
 Carole Trone
 Catherine Lackey
 Christy Clausell
 Chris Woodling
 Cynthia Hall

Dale Cousins
 Elizabeth Elder
 Elizabeth K. Hamner
 Emilie Dye
 Gary Carr
 Gayle E. Headen
 Holly Peloquin
 Iris Robinson
 Jennifer MacPherson
 Jessica Holmes
 Joe & Katherine White
 John Roshan
 Joseph Fourie
 Karen Ponder
 Katherine Williams
 Lisa Hartung
 Marian Miele
 Matthew Crotty

Megan Gill
 Mickey Holt
 Dr. Mike & Jolene Smith
 Nicole Leonard
 Petra Hager
 Rachel Smith
 Richard Adelman
 Ronetta Pearsall
 Sarah Burney
 Sherry & David Heuser
 Shirley Herndon
 Sig & Nancy Hutchinson
 Stephanie Shell
 Susan Evans
 Veronica Creech



ORGANIZATIONS

Duke Energy
 Hiester Cares Foundation
 John Rex Endowment
 LifeTime Asset Management
 Merz Aesthetics
 Pledgeling Foundation
 PNC Foundation
 RBC Foundation
 Truist Bank
 Wegmans
 Whole Foods Market



Funded Partners

WCSS supports a network of partner agencies delivering direct services and systems-level supports, including:

AGENCY

PARTNER PROGRAM

BOOK HARVEST	<i>Book Babies</i>
CATHOLIC CHARITIES	<i>School Readiness Services for Hispanic Children</i>
EARLY YEARS	<i>Rebuilding Capacity for Quality</i>
FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER SOUTH ATLANTIC	<i>Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)</i>
FIESTA CRISTIANA MISSION CONGREGATION	<i>Building Family Support</i>
LUCY DANIELS CENTER	<i>SecurePath</i>
SAFECHILD	<i>Crianza con Cariño, The Nurturing Program for Spanish Speaking Families</i>
STEPUP MINISTRY	<i>Baby Steps/Little Steps</i>
TRIANGLE AREA PARENTING SUPPORT	<i>Breastfeeding Support and Education</i>
TRIANGLE AREA PARENTING SUPPORT	<i>Circle of Security, Parenting</i>
WAKE COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES	<i>Child Care Health Consultant Program (CCHC)</i>
WAKE COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES	<i>Nurse Family Partnership</i>
WAKE COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES	<i>Subsidy</i>
WAKE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM OFFICE	<i>Parents as Teachers (PAT)</i>
OF EARLY LEARNING	
WAKE COUNTY SMART START	<i>NC Pre-K</i>
WAKE COUNTY SMART START	<i>NC Pre-K Quality Enhancement</i>
WAKE COUNTY SMART START	<i>Quality Enhancement</i>
WAKE COUNTY SMART START	<i>System Improvement and Public Engagement (SIPE)</i>
WAKE COUNTY SMART START	<i>SIPE Family Navigation</i>

United, they served nearly 3,000 children, supported hundreds of families, and strengthened almost 300 early learning facilities.

Board Members

We are grateful to the dedicated leaders who guide and strengthen Wake County Smart Start. Their commitment, expertise, and partnership make our mission possible and help ensure that children and families across Wake County thrive.

- | | | | | | |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| André Anthony | Joe White | Matthew Glova
<i>Treasurer</i> | Nikki Leonard | Stacey Wilson-Norman | Tonya Venable |
| Antonia Pedroza | Katherine Williams
<i>Chair</i> | Mickey Holt | Ronetta Pearsall | Stephanie Shell | Veronica Creech |
| Ariel Ford | Matthew Ellinwood
<i>Secretary</i> | Nikia Coates
<i>Vice Chair</i> | Sherry Heuser
<i>Past Chair</i> | Susan Evans | |
| Cheryl Stallings | | | | | |



Employees

- | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Alejandra Livas-Dlott | Giovanni Torres | Robert Linens |
| Alex Setzer | Gwendolyn Adair | Sabrina McKennies |
| Ana Gallo | Jenine Gatewood | Sasha R. Gomez |
| Angela Griffin | Jennifer Hoch | Stephanie Jenkins |
| Ariel McInay | Jennifer MacPherson | Sue Bush |
| Arletta Marshall | Joan Crutchfield | Tamiko McCullough |
| Brittany Turner | Kimberley McNeil | Taushau Wilkinson |
| Brandis Miller | Kinrecka Anderson | Taylor Young |
| Bryce McClamroch | Latasha Jenkins | Vanessa Celayos |
| Carol Orji | Lisa Flores | Vanessa Guzman |
| Caroline Janes | Lisa Kidder | Yadira Rosero |
| Christina Mitchell | Lynn Policastro | |
| Deidra McMillan | Maribel Henriquez | |
| Denise Rossi | Marta Maldonado | |
| Dominique Holder | Melissa Radice-Peguero | |
| Emily Diaz | Nancy Peck | |
| Gary Carr | Natasha Williams | |
| Gayle E. Headen | Nikki S. McDougald | |
| Gina Soceanu | Ramona Maldonado | |

How to Get Involved

Your involvement helps ensure that every child in Wake County enters school ready to succeed. There are many meaningful ways to support early childhood education:

DONATE

Your contributions help fill critical gaps in early childhood services—funding classroom supports, family programs, health services, and system-building work that public dollars alone cannot cover.

VOLUNTEER

Volunteers are at the heart of events like our annual Block Party and Pre-K application days, meeting families where they are, and helping them connect to resources when it matters most.

Community members and corporate teams can participate in activities such as:

- **Building outdoor learning environments**
- **Assisting with family events such as our Block Party and Pre-K application event**
- **Supporting supply drives for child care centers**
- **Helping strengthen early learning spaces**

ADVOCATE

You can use your voice to champion high-quality early education and ensure that local and state leaders understand the importance of investing in early childhood programs.

LEARN MORE

To explore ways to support young children and their families, visit wakesmartstart.org/get-involved.

