



SMART START MATTERS

A publication of Richmond County Partnership for Children

Smart Start funding may be cut statewide

Smart Start funding is in jeopardy in North Carolina.

As the General Assembly designs a state budget for next year and tries to accommodate an estimated \$2.7 billion deficit, many programs are on the chopping block.

Smart Start is one of those programs.

The Republican leadership have directed the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees on Education and Health and Human Services to consider consolidating and/or eliminating Smart Start and More at Four.

Dr. Olson Huff, board chair of The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc., which directs Smart Start, is dismayed by that news.

“I am saddened for the children of North Carolina that the General Assembly would even consider eliminating Smart Start or More at Four,” he said.

“Children, particularly our youngest children, need to be priority one. It is not hyperbole to state that the lives of a generation of children hang in the balance.



Child care professional Jessica McLendon of Little Kingdom Childcare, Inc. works with children outside in a sand box. The children think it's just fun, but they are developing many skills, such as coordination, sharing and working together.

“The impact of continued disinvestment will be compounded over generations. We know too much to let this happen.

“Neuroscience has changed how we think of the earliest years. Images of the brain show that the experiences children have early in life literally shape the wiring of the brain and strongly affect whether a child grows up to be a healthy, productive member of society.”

Approximately 90 percent of the Richmond County Partnership for Children’s budget comes from the

General Assembly. This year, the \$1.1 million allotment is being used to fund nine programs:

- ◆ Child Care Subsidy & Admin.
- ◆ Sandhills Children’s Center
- ◆ Child Care Health Consultant
- ◆ Teen Parents as Teachers
- ◆ Assuring Better Child Development
- ◆ Child Care Star Enhancement
- ◆ Child Care Resource and Referral
- ◆ Child Care Quality Enhancement
- ◆ Child Care Professional Development.

Partnership celebrating Week of the Young Child

The Richmond County Partnership for Children is celebrating the annual "Week of the Young Child" April 10 through 16 with lots of activities for children of Richmond County to enjoy.

The nationally-designated week focuses public attention on the needs of young children and their families and recognizes early childhood programs and services that meet those needs. The theme for 2011 is Early Years Are Learning Years®.

"Early learning experiences are crucial to the growth and development of young children," said Martha Vance Brown, executive director of the Partnership.

"The Week of the Young Child provides opportunities for all of us to recognize the importance of the early years and to work together to build better futures for all children. Never before have the needs of young children and their families been more pressing."

In celebration, the Partnership is hosting a "Day At Our Office" for child care classes.

Facilities are invited to bring preschool students to the Partnership office to enjoy story time, games and a snack.

This special day is April 13.

Facilities should contact Michell Kocan or Brandi Covington to reserve a time for their students.

**week of the
young child**



Scenes from the 2010 festivities

Lauren Lamb and Miguel Hernandez, above, create Frisbee crafts during the Day At Our Office to take home.



Above left, Patricia Padron licks her lips after eating ice cream. Above right, Darlene Burris of the Partnership paints the face of James Strickland as classmate Rebeca Avalos watches

On April 16, the Partnership is co-hosting the annual Fun Day with Richmond Community College Early Childhood Department.

The free event will be held on the college campus from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. and is open to the public. Children of all ages can make crafts, listen to stories, play games and much more. Pizza and drinks will be for sale.

"The Week of the Young Child is a time to recognize that children's opportunities are our responsibilities," Vance Brown said. "It's a time to recommit ourselves to ensuring that each and every child in Richmond County experiences the type of early environment – at home, at child care, at school and in the community – that will

promote their early learning."

For more information on Week of the Young Child or these events, contact the Partnership at (910) 997-3773.

Quality of Richmond child care is excellent . . .

The quality of early care and education in Richmond County is excellent, surpassing the state's high performing standard, according to data released by the North Carolina Partnership for Children (NCPC). The data is part of NCPC's annual assessment of county programs.

Based on a one to five star system, the county's facilities have an average of 3.96 stars for 62 percent of all enrolled children, an increase from 3.6 stars last year. The county's facilities exceed the state average of 3.84 stars.

The high performance rating jumps to 4.17 stars for 82 percent of children receiving subsidy, such as Head Start, More at Four or Title 1 public school pre-kindergarten. That achievement marks an increase from an average 3.88 stars the previous year and exceeds the state rate of 3.99 stars.

Children with special needs who are attending child care under subsidized payment are attending facilities with 4.78 stars out of a possible 5 stars, and 100 percent of children are being served. The state average is 4.4 stars.

"This is an excellent report for our county," commented Martha Vance Brown, executive director of Richmond County Partnership for Children.



Martha Vance Brown

"Numerous studies have proven that quality early childhood education is critical to a child's success in kindergarten and throughout life.

"Quality care has been linked directly

. . . but availability is insufficient.

Richmond County does not have enough regulated child care to provide adequate support to working families, according to state standards. Overall, the county has 73 percent of the spaces it needs. Child care spaces are provided through private child care businesses and funded, primarily, through families' payments.

Richmond varies widely from the state availability. Across the state, there is an excess of regulated child care spaces available for working families, with 125 percent of the spaces needed.

"That means that some Richmond County children are less likely to receive the pre-kindergarten education they need to ensure they are prepared to begin school ready to learn," Vance Brown explained.

State records show that just 46 percent of low-income children are enrolled in care, such as subsidized child care, Head Start, More at Four or Title 1 public school pre-kindergarten.

to the ability to graduate from high school, earn a higher wage, own a home and to stay out of prison.

The state report also shows the education level of Richmond's early childhood educators at a high performing standard for child care centers.

The county surpasses the state's standards in several other areas:

- ◆ Percent of children birth to 2 who receive early intervention/special education services. The minimum standard is greater than 3 percent; the county rate is 4.2 percent. The state average is 4.8 percent.

- ◆ Percent of children 3 to 5 who receive early intervention/special education services. The minimum standard is greater than 3 percent; the county and state rate are both 5 percent.

- ◆ Percent of low-income children

who receive a well-child exam. The minimum rate is greater than 70 percent; Richmond achieved 74 percent. The state average is 76 percent.

- ◆ Rate of infant deaths within the first year. The state high performing standard is less than 7.41 percent; Richmond is 4.8 percent. The state average is 7.9 percent.

- ◆ Percent of children who are obese. The minimum state standard is less than 12.27 percent; Richmond's rate is 10.5 percent, just below the high performing standard of less than 10 percent. The state average is 15.4 percent.

- ◆ Percent of children with elevated blood lead levels. The standard is less than 2.3 percent; Richmond is .6 percent, just missing the high performing standard of less than .5 percent. The state average is .4 percent.

April - June Training Calendar

Child Abuse & Neglect

Tuesday, April 5

6:15 p.m. - 7:15 p.m.

At the Partnership

Cost is \$3

Taught by Marsha Williams

Information will help participants better understand what is child abuse and neglect, how these negative behaviors affect children, how to recognize signs of abuse/neglect and how to help children who are the victims of abuse/neglect.

Register by March 31 at 4 p.m.

Bio-Color

Thursday, April 21

6:30 p.m. - 8 p.m.

At the Partnership

Cost is \$3

Register by April 19 at 4 p.m.

Fitness & Physical Activity for Young Children

Thursday, May 26

6:15 p.m. - 7:15 p.m.

At the Partnership

Cost is \$3

Taught by Marsha Williams

Utilizing the curriculum developed by Healthy Childcare Consultants, Inc. CHIPR, participants will be able to acknowledge the importance of fitness for young children; list the benefits of active play; describe appropriate indoor activities to promote fitness; describe appropriate outdoor activities to promote fitness.

Register by May 24 at 4 p.m.

Developmentally Appropriate Ways To Talk To Children About Death

Tuesday, May 31

6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

At the Partnership

Cost is \$3

Taught by Lisa Ledford

In this class, participants will learn how to talk to children about death. Participants will learn signs and phases of grief. They will also take away activities they can use with children that are dealing with death.

Register by May 26 at 4 p.m.

Creating Outdoor Learning Environments for Infants and Toddlers

Thursday, June 2

6 p.m. - 8 p.m.

At the Partnership

Cost is \$3

Taught by Cassia Simms-Smith

Learn the benefits of taking children outside daily. Class will suggest how to create spaces for infants and toddlers outside that support all areas of learning and introduce them to the natural environment. Finally, participants will be given ideas on what activities can be included in their outdoor spaces.

Register by May 31 at 4 p.m.

Playground Safety

Tuesday, June 7

6:15 p.m. - 7:15 p.m.

At the Partnership

Cost is \$3

Taught by Marsha Williams

This training will utilize materials by Healthy Childcare Consultants, Inc. Participants will learn injuries that occur on playgrounds and be able to demonstrate appropriate supervision practices, state the importance of age appropriate equipment, identify appropriate surfacing materials; and propose ways to improve their playgrounds.

Register by June 2 at 4 p.m.

Sun Safety

Tuesday, June 7

7:15 p.m. - 8:15 p.m.

At the Partnership

Free if taken with 6:15 class; otherwise cost is \$3.

Taught by Marsha Williams

This class will demonstrate the importance of sun safety by addressing the possible problems of over-exposure to UV radiation and ways to avoid this.

Register by June 2 at 4 p.m.

Playground Safety

Saturday, June 25

9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

At the Partnership

Cost is \$5

Taught by Molly Alexi

This workshop shows providers how to check their own playgrounds for safety concerns.

Register by June 21 at 4 p.m.

Registration sheet for classes

Session Title	Date	Number Attending	Fee	Total Amount
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Child Abuse & Neglect	April 5	_____	\$3	_____
Names _____				

Bio-Color	April 21	_____	\$3	_____
Names _____				

Fitness & Physical Activity for Young Children	May 26	_____	\$3	_____
Names _____				

Talking To Children About Death	May 31	_____	\$3	_____
Names _____				

Creating Outdoor Learning Environments	June 2	_____	\$3	_____
Names _____				

Playground Safety	June 7	_____	\$3	_____
Names _____				

Sun Safety	June 7	_____	\$3 or Free	_____
Names _____				

Playground Safety	June 25	_____	\$5	_____
Names _____				

Registration only valid with cash or check payable to Richmond County Partnership for Children. Forms and payments can be delivered or mailed to PO Box 1944, Rockingham, NC 28380. Registration is due two business days before training; refunds only if a session is canceled. Children are not allowed at training classes. If you bring a child, you will be asked to leave. Participants who arrive more than 15 minutes late will not receive a certificate of completion. However, you may still participate.

Amount Enclosed _____

Make 'n' Take draws crowd of parents, children



Parents and children took the opportunity in February to enjoy an evening of *Make 'n' Take* at the Partnership for Children office. The free event was enjoyed by many!

Above, Jackie Blue and her daughter cut out whiskers for a lion mask.



Above Stacey Straight and her daughter display a masterpiece they created using ice and dry tempera paint.



At left, Kelly Monroe and daughter Karlee are making a lion mask.

Child abuse affects 3 million each year

Each year approximately 3 million children are reported abused or neglected in the U.S.; 3 children die each day from abuse and neglect.

The major reasons for physical and psychological mistreatment of children within the family often are parental feelings of isolation, stress, and frustration.

Parents need support and as much information as possible in order to raise their children responsibly. They need to be taught how to cope with their own feelings of frustration and anger without venting them on children. They also need the

companionship of other adults who will listen and help during times of crisis.

Support groups through local community organizations often are

helpful first steps to diminish some of the isolation or frustration parents may be feeling.

Parents who were themselves victims of abuse as children are in particular need of support.

Confronting, addressing, and healing old wounds take uncommon courage and insight, but doing so is often the best assurance that the cycle of abuse is not passed on to the next generation.

April is Child Abuse
Prevention Month



www.preventchildabuse.org

Learn to recognize abuse

Physical Abuse is when a child is hit, slapped, beaten, burned, or otherwise physically harmed. Like other forms of abuse, physical abuse usually continues for a long time.

Sexual Abuse is when a child is engages in a sexual situation with an adult or an older child. Sometimes this means direct sexual contact, such as intercourse, other genital contact or touching. But it can also mean that the child is made to watch sexual acts, look at an adult's genitals, look at pornography or be part of the production of pornography. Children many times are not forced into the sexual situation, but rather they are persuaded, bribed, tricked or coerced.

Emotional or Psychological Abuse is when a child is regularly threatened, yelled at, humiliated, ignored, blamed or otherwise emotionally mistreated. For example, making fun of a child, calling a child names, and always finding fault are forms of emotional/psychological abuse.

Neglect is when a child's basic needs are not met. These needs include nutritious food, adequate shelter, clothing, cleanliness, emotional support, love and affection, education, safety, and medical and dental care.

American Academy of Pediatrics

Extensive child abuse prevention information and tips are available online at www.missourikidsfirst.org/pcamo/?page_id=654

Briefly

The Early Childhood Inclusion Institute in Chapel Hill, May 16-18, is the premier event for people who care about young children to come together to learn, share and problem-solve.

It is an opportunity to keep up with what's happening in the field, broaden your knowledge of the latest inclusive practices and further professional growth!

This year's keynote speaker is Beth Harry, a parent of a child with a disability and author of "Melanie, Bird With A Broken Wing, A Mother's Story."

The Institute will provide many new opportunities to support early childhood inclusion. For more information and registration forms, visit www.nectac.org.

Teacher scholarships are available for the fall semester.

The 2011 National ECE Scholarship Program has three scholarships for students pursuing degrees in early childhood education:

\$1,500 for the second year of an associate's degree program.

\$2,500 for the junior year in a bachelor's degree program.

\$2,500 scholarship for those enrolled in a master's degree program.

Applications can be completed online at www.brighthorizons.com/scholarship.

All applications are due June 1.

Our board of directors and staff

Richmond County Partnership for Children is fortunate to have the expertise and guidance of an outstanding volunteer board of directors.

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