

High Quality Child Care Programs Have:

- Highly skilled teachers
- Warm, responsive interactions between staff and children
- Small class sizes with high adult-to-child ratios
- Age-appropriate lessons
- A safe setting

Source: *A Science-Based Framework for Early Childhood Policies*



How Smart Start Works

Decades of research point to factors that improve child development in the first five years of life. Smart Start programs improve child health, family support, and access to high quality child care and education.

Medical Care and Early Diagnosis

Children who go to the doctor for regular check ups are more likely to have important immunizations and have their health and developmental issues diagnosed early in life so they can get the necessary help. Smart Start connects families to physicians, as well as state insurance programs, to keep kids healthy.

Family Support

Children who have positive relationships with their parents have better health and social skills. In addition, children with parents who read to them have a better chance of succeeding in school. Smart Start programs help improve parenting skills and teach parents how to effectively read at home with their kids.

Access to High Quality Child Care

Studies show that children in high-quality child care programs have better brain and social development. To give all children the best start at their education, Smart Start connects families to high-quality child care and often helps families pay for this care.

Smart Start also improves the quality of child care programs by offering providers support to improve their skills and facilities.

Smart Start's Mission:

To advance a high-quality, comprehensive, accountable system of care and education for every child beginning with a healthy birth.



www.ncsmartstart.org

Ways to Support North Carolina's Children

Your voice, skills, and time can help pave a bright future for all of our children and strengthen our state.



SPEAK UP ABOUT CHILDREN'S ISSUES

Show your support children when speaking with your local leaders, civic groups, friends, family or faith-based community. Invite Smart Start to speak at an event.

VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME

Contact NCPC or your local Smart Start partnership and find ways to take part in community events, fundraisers or serve on a partnership board or advisory committee. ACTION: Visit our website to find local partnerships in your area, www.ncsmartstart.org

SHARE YOUR EXPERTISE

Join partnership committees or community collaboratives to apply your knowledge about business, childhood education, public health, public relations, etc., to early childhood initiatives.

S m a r t

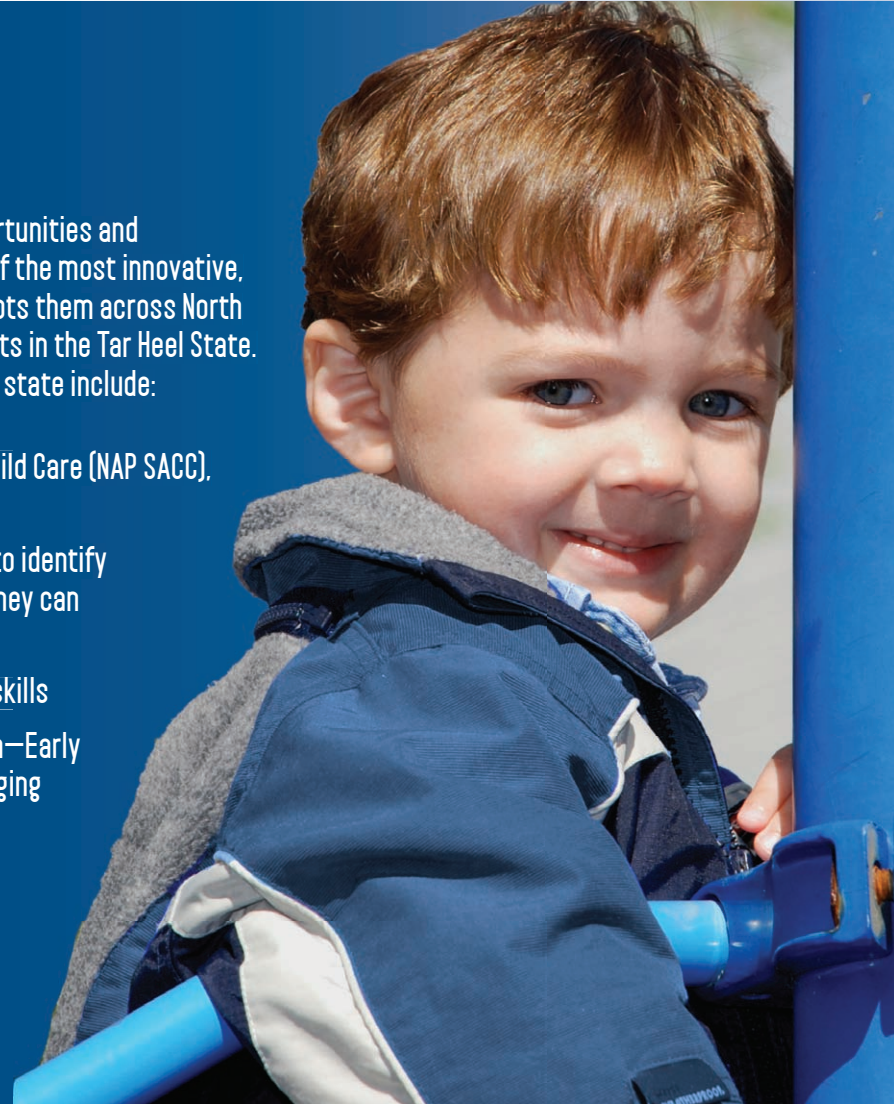
S T A R T

Looking to the Future

Pilot Programs

As our state continues to grow and change, so do the opportunities and challenges facing communities. Smart Start brings some of the most innovative, evidence-based programs from across the country and pilots them across North Carolina to see if they can produce the same positive results in the Tar Heel State. Recent programs Smart Start has implemented across the state include:

- Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care (NAP SACC), program to reduce childhood obesity
- Assuring Better Child Health and Development (ABCD), to identify children with health and developmental concerns so they can receive services
- Raising a Reader®, to improve children's pre-reading skills
- The Incredible-Years: BASIC Parenting Training Program—Early Childhood, to help parents deal with children's challenging behaviors



Why it Matters

North Carolina's future

prosperity depends on how we strengthen and build our communities today. Future citizens and leaders are born every day, and by working together to ensure they all have opportunities for healthy development, success in school, and a productive life, we build a stronger North Carolina for generations to come.

Children who experience positive, nurturing relationships with parents and other caregivers have better health and social skills. Science tells us these early interactions directly affect the way the brain is "wired." By making sure

families and communities have the resources they need to support children's development, we help nurture responsible, productive citizens who will make positive contributions to our society.

Smart Start brings together families, teachers, doctors, dentists, libraries, schools and many others to create a comprehensive system of child care and education for children across the state. In doing so, Smart Start leads the way in building a brighter future for all of North Carolina.



"All aspects of adult human capital, from work force skills to cooperative and lawful behavior, build on capacities that are developed during childhood, beginning at birth." —Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University and the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child (2007)

Studies confirm that children who participate in Smart Start supported programs arrive at school ready for success. A 2003 study of preschool children in North Carolina concluded:

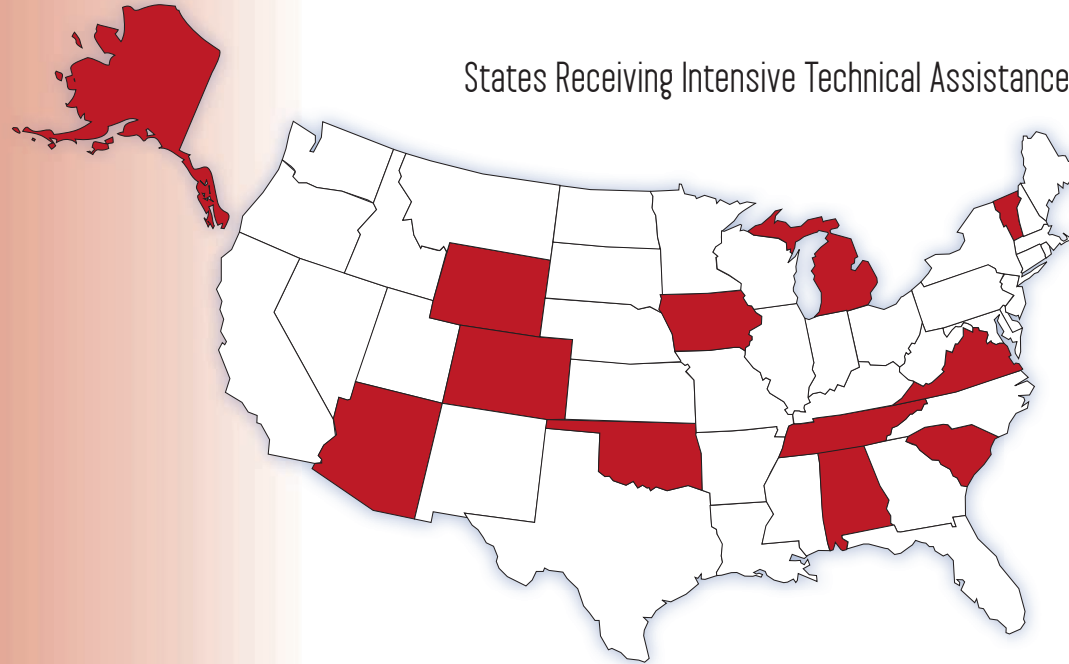
- Child care quality has increased during the Smart Start years
- Smart Start-funded activities were positively related to classroom quality
- Quality was positively related to children's outcomes

Source: FPG Child Development Institute



National Technical Assistance Center (NTAC):

Smart Start is a national leader in early childhood education. Every state in the nation has requested assistance and resources from Smart Start. Thanks to support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Smart Start provides technical assistance to states and communities that want to learn from our experience in developing a high-quality, comprehensive early childhood system.



- | | |
|----------|----------------|
| Alabama | Oklahoma |
| Alaska | South Carolina |
| Arizona | Tennessee |
| Colorado | Vermont |
| Iowa | Virginia |
| Michigan | Wyoming |



Ready Schools Initiative:

Children who do well in school, especially in the early grades, are more likely to finish high school, go to college, have a job, and are less likely to commit crimes.

The NC Ready Schools Initiative, a partnership between Smart Start and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, helps preschool and elementary schools work together to make sure teachers are "ready" to help children of all backgrounds succeed academically.

Some Elements of a Ready School:

- A welcoming atmosphere
- Effective leadership
- Connections in the community
- Cultural and linguistic connections with children and families



Smart Start's History

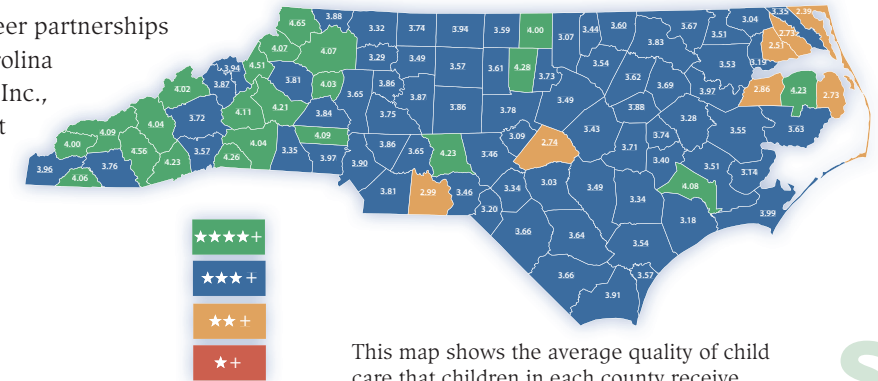
In the late 1980s, North Carolina

faced many challenges with child care quality standards. In 1992, after serving two terms, Gov. Jim Hunt convened a small group of experts from community colleges, non-profits, health departments, schools, Head Start, private child care providers and more, to create a white paper about early education. This initiative became Smart Start.

Start boasts 78 partnerships that use public and private funds to serve the needs of all 100 counties.

Thanks, in part, to Smart Start's commitment to child care quality improvement, the state now has a licensed star rating system and many high-quality child care programs.

In 1993, the first 12 pioneer partnerships began and The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc., was created to lead Smart Start. Today, Smart



This map shows the average quality of child care that children in each county receive.