

A Newcomer's Guide to Early Childhood Education Programs in Wake County

As a newcomer to the field of early childhood education, it is easy to become confused by the plethora of programs with similar-sounding names, similar services and goals. Below is a glossary to help as you navigate the early childhood education environment.



Child Care Services Association (CCSA) – This Triangle-wide non-profit organization administers teacher training, substitute teacher, quality enhancement, quality maintenance, tuition assistance, salary supplement and nutrition programs. It also helps parents learn about child care options. Online: www.childcareservices.org.

Cooperative Extension Service – A state organization based at N.C. State University and N.C. A&T State University, the N.C. Cooperative Extension Service has offices in all 100 counties. The service offers advice and operates programs related to agriculture, health, nutrition, the environment, youth and community development. Trainings and classes are offered on food and nutrition, care giving and much more. Online: <http://wake.ces.ncsu.edu/>.

Children's Developmental Services (CDAs) – In N.C., the local CDAs are required to assure that children from birth to three years of age receive services mandated under the N.C. Infant-Toddler Program. The Wake County office serves as a point of referral for the N.C. Infant-Toddler Program and works with other agencies to provide early intervention services for children ages birth to three who have special needs and their families. Early intervention services help young children grow and develop and support their families in caring for them. Online: <http://www.ncei.org/ei/index.html>.

Early Head Start – This federal program is designed to help low-income families with infants, toddlers or pregnant women improve their health, enhance their children's development and create strong family bonds. It offers home visits, child care services and a variety of other aid, including social services. Locally, it is funded by Telamon Corporation. Online: <http://www.telamon.org/showstate.aspx?contentid=108&folderid=74> or www.ehsnrc.org.

Family Support Network of Wake County – The Family Support Network is a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting, educating, and informing families of children with: prematurity, developmental disabilities, chronic illness and other special needs. Services are free, and referrals are confidential. The organization provides workshops and trainings, resources and events for families to attend. Online: <http://www.familysupportonline.org/>.



Head Start – This federal program was launched in 1965 to serve low-income families and children. Like Early Head Start, it provides child-care services and a variety of social services. In the 2009 fiscal year, Head Start served more than 904,000 children on a budget of \$7.1 billion. In North Carolina, Head Start spent nearly \$141.6 million to serve 19,000 youngsters and families. Locally, Head Start serves more than 500 children each year and is funded by Telamon Corporation. Online: www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ohs (federal government), www.nhsa.org (national nonprofit organization), www.ntheadstart.org (North Carolina), <http://www.telamon.org/showstate.aspx?contentid=108&folderid=74> (Telamon).

North Carolina Division of Child Development — To use a searchable database of licensed child care providers across the state which include child care centers, family child care homes, and day camps, click here: <http://ncchildcaresearch.dhhs.state.nc.us/search.asp>. Other resources are available here as well.

Smart Start – This state program was founded in 1993 and works in a variety of ways to improve early childhood education. Areas of concentration include promoting literacy, improving school readiness, smoothing the transition to kindergarten, expanding health care availability and advising and assisting child care providers. Smart Start's budget last year was \$210 million. Online: www.ncsmartstart.org.

Wake County Human Services – Wake County Human Services offers a number of programs that benefit children, birth to 5, and their families. Of the programs offered, Wake County SmartStart provides funding for five. They include: **Child Health Outreach Workers (CHOW)** that provides parents with a care plan, parenting information, appropriate books and toys as needed and evaluates in-home safety; **Child Care Health Consultant Program** that provides on-site health, safety, and nutrition consultation in child care facilities; **Child Care Subsidy Service** that provides families earning less than 75 percent of the state median income, families with special needs, and homeless families, with financial assistance for child care; **Enriching Families and Nurturing Children**, providing parent education for families whose children have been identified as having a behavior or social-emotional concern, and; **Nurse Family Partnership**, a program that addresses the needs of low-income, first-time parents to provide support, education and one-on-one interaction. Online: <http://www.wakegov.com/humanservices/default.htm>.



Wake County Public School System – The public school system provides pre-kindergarten classes for area children using state More at Four and federal Title I dollars. The district also has more than 500 pre-K slots for special-needs children and provides additional special education services offered outside of the classroom. **Project Enlightenment** is an educational program provided by the Wake County Public School System to provide early childhood education and intervention services. The program is geared toward parents and teachers of young children, from birth through kindergarten, in Wake County. Its programs funded by Wake County SmartStart, include: Consultation and Support for Child Care Providers, Parents as Teachers (PAT) program and its Supporting School Readiness program. Online: <http://www.wcpss.net/> and <http://www.projectenlightenment.wcpss.net/>.

Wake County SmartStart – Wake County SmartStart is a nonprofit organization that works to ensure every child in Wake County, birth to 5, is prepared for success in school and life. Organized in 1996, Wake County SmartStart works to improve the quality, accessibility and affordability of child care settings, provide preventive health and early intervention services and offer family support services. The organization also promotes, supports, and advocates for the needs of young children living in Wake County. Find information on the More at Four program, family resources, community partners and more online at: www.wakesmartstart.org.

Wake Tech Community College – Wake Tech Community College offers an Early Childhood associate degree which pre-pares individuals to work with children from infancy through childhood in diverse learning environments. Its program offers hands-on experience and prepares students to plan and implement developmentally appropriate programs in early childhood settings. Online: <http://earlychildhoodedu.waketech.edu/index.php>.



For additional information about Wake County programs supporting early childhood education, please visit www.wakesmartstart.org or <http://ncchildcaresearch.dhhs.state.nc.us/search.asp>.