



For Immediate Release
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Press Release

Karine V. Stallings
Communications Director
3203 Woman's Club Drive
Raleigh, NC 27612
919 789-9990 phone
919 599-5855 cell
919 789-9991 fax
kstallings@wakesmartstart.org

SMARTSTART PARTNER FAIR TO CONNECT AGENCIES THAT SERVE YOUNG CHILDREN, FAMILIES
Event aims at building stronger ties between service providers to coordinate services for more children.

RALEIGH—Wake County SmartStart will be hosting a Partner Fair, “Making Connections,” on Tuesday, Nov. 29, for nearly 200 professionals and 20 agencies who serve young children in the areas of health, early care and education and family support.

SmartStart, an organization that works to ensure children ages birth to 5, especially those who need help most, are healthy and ready for success in school and life, saw Wake County needed more opportunities for service providers, such as early intervention specialists, child care providers, therapists and health and human service personnel to connect with one another and learn about each other’s services for young children and their families. Both community agencies and those funded by Wake County SmartStart are scheduled to attend the event from 8:30 to 11 a.m. at Caspar Business Park, 5511 Avent Ferry Road, Raleigh NC 27606.

“By convening service providers who work to serve young children in different capacities and areas, we aim to facilitate meaningful interactions that will lead to more coordination around service deliveries, referrals and waiting list reductions,” says Pamela Dowdy, executive director of Wake County SmartStart. “By promoting understanding for our countywide system of support for young children and families in Wake County among service providers and the broader community, we will better serve the needs of young children.”

Over the last 10 years, Wake County SmartStart has invested more than \$69 million in funding to help young children, families and child care providers.

Wake County SmartStart celebrates its 10th anniversary this fiscal year and has worked with agency partners to create systemic change in early care and education, family support services and identifying children for early intervention services. Last fiscal year, Wake County SmartStart served more than 17,000 Wake County children, 6,000 of those children through specialized services, such as developmental screenings, consultations and home visiting support programs.

As a local partner of the North Carolina Partnership for Children, **Wake County SmartStart** works with national, state and local agencies, as well as other nonprofits that serve Wake County children, ages birth to 5, and their families through vital programs. Wake County SmartStart works to improve the quality, accessibility and affordability of child care settings, provide preventive health services and support families in a variety of ways. The organization also promotes, supports, and advocates for the needs of young children living in Wake County. To obtain more information on Wake County SmartStart’s allocation of state funds and its activities with local partner agencies, visit www.wakesmartstart.org.