



**BlueCross BlueShield
of North Carolina**

Foundation

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Wake County SmartStart Receives \$21,152 from the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation in Support of Program to Reduce Childhood Obesity

Program improves nutrition and physical activity in child care centers

RALEIGH, NC– The Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina (BCBSNC) Foundation is investing \$21,152 in a Wake County SmartStart-administered program to reduce childhood obesity. The Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care (NAP SACC) program is an evidence-based intervention developed at UNC-Chapel Hill that works to improve the nutrition and physical activity practices and policies in child care centers that impact children ages 2 to 5.

In North Carolina, the percentage of children ages 2 to 4 who are overweight or are at risk for becoming overweight has increased steadily from 22% in 1995 to 31% in 2007, according to a report by the North Carolina Nutrition and Physical Activity Surveillance System (2007). Approximately 52% of North Carolina’s children between the ages of 2 and 5 are enrolled in licensed child care centers. These children may consume between 50% and 100% of their Recommended Dietary Allowances while at the child care facility.

To address this increase in childhood obesity among 2 to 5-year-olds, NAP SACC uses state-trained child care health consultants who work with child care center directors to improve nutritional and physical activities and policies. The health consultants help centers create action plans and provide technical assistance for at least six months. The goal is that 75% of participating centers completing action plans will demonstrate improvement in nutritional and physical activity practices. This may include increased physical activity time and offering healthier food to the children in their care.

Since Smart Start launched the program in 2007, NAP SACC has reached 3,446 children from 67 child care centers in nine counties. Increasing access to physical activity and proper nutrition is a central focus of the BCBSNC Foundation which is contributing more than \$240,000 to support NAP SACC in Burke, Catawba, Guilford, McDowell, Mecklenburg, Orange, Person, Stanly, and Wake Counties through July 2009. Smart Start is also funding the program in Wayne County.

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“We would like to thank the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation for their commitment to reducing childhood obesity in Wake County,” said Executive Director Pam Dowdy. “They are invested in improving the health of our youngest citizens. With their support, we can help child care providers set healthy examples for the children in their care now, and all the children they will care for in the future.”

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Smart Start is North Carolina’s early childhood leadership network dedicated to assuring that every child reaches his or her potential and is prepared for success in a global community. For more information, visit www.ncsmartstart.org.

For the **NAP SACC evaluation report**, visit <http://www.ncsmartstart.org/docs/grantreports/NAPSACC5-27-08.pdf>.

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