



# *News Release*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 16, 2009

---

## **Wake County SmartStart Receives Grant from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation**

*Funding will support efforts to reduce childhood obesity*

RALEIGH, N.C. – In May 2009, the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina (BCBSNC) Foundation approved a \$5,000 grant for the Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care (NAP SACC) program, administered by Wake County SmartStart since August 2008. NAP SACC is an evidence-based intervention developed at UNC-Chapel Hill aimed at reducing childhood obesity by improving the nutrition and physical activity practices and policies in child care centers.

“BCBSNC Foundation has a long tradition of working to improve the health and well-being of North Carolinians of all ages. Wake County SmartStart is proud to continue to partner with them to address childhood obesity in Wake County,” said Anna Troutman, Wake County SmartStart’s program coordination and evaluation director. “In an era when we are seeing reduced funding for community-based programs, we are encouraged by BCBSNC Foundation’s continued support of this program which is critically important to the health of many of our children,” added Troutman.

While BCBSNC Foundation’s 2008-09 NAP SACC grant to the North Carolina Partnership for Children was used to address both nutrition and physical activity policies and practices in child care centers and homes, the 2009-10 equipment grant to Wake County SmartStart will specifically target physical activity practices. Portable play equipment will be purchased for 15 Wake County child care centers. Because the equipment will be a mix of materials appropriate for outdoor play, or indoor play for inclement weather days, physical activity will be incorporated on a daily basis regardless of weather.

For Terry Hauk, director of Kids Educational Center in Wendell who began participating in the program last year, NAP SACC brought nothing but benefits to her center. Because of the NAP SACC program “we introduced positive changes in both our menus and our physical activity. Fruits and vegetables, grilled items instead of breaded foods and white meats were seen more frequently on our menus, for example. And to encourage movement we introduced new structured activities which really engaged the children,” explained Hauk.

-- more --

According to a report by NAP SACC, in Wake County the percentage of 2 to 4-year-olds who are overweight or are at risk for becoming overweight has increased steadily from 26% in 2002 to 33% in 2007. To address the increase in obesity among preschool-aged children, NAP SACC uses state-trained child care health consultants who work with child care center directors to improve nutrition and physical activity 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.

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. Created 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. For more information about Wake County SmartStart, its partners and projects, visit [www.wakesmartstart.org](http://www.wakesmartstart.org) or call (919) 851-9550.

###

**Contacts:**

Anna Troutman, Program Coordination and Evaluation Director, (919) 851-9550, Ext. 1501  
Marie Maguire, Communications Director, (919) 851-9550, Ext. 1102