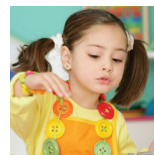




Building Tomorrow's Future Investing in Children Now



OUR MISSION

Wake County SmartStart works to ensure children, birth to five, are prepared for success in school and in life.



Wake County SmartStart Core Values

RESPECT

We honor the unique experiences and needs of each young child and family.

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

We value diversity, promote inclusive practice and support community empowerment.

ADVOCACY

We provide a strong, united voice for those most vulnerable – our children.

RESPONSIVENESS

We respond to the individual needs of children and families with regard for our larger community as a whole.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

We support community collaboration through authentic relationships characterized by honesty, integrity and compassion.

INNOVATION

We value flexibility, actively seek new approaches in practice and regard challenges as opportunities for growth.

ACCOUNTABILITY

We value our role as public stewards through the use of best business practices, strong internal controls and accurate documentation of our efforts.

"A solid body of research shows the cost-effectiveness of early childhood development in helping to prevent achievement gaps, boost school achievement, promote better health outcomes, improve our workforce, increase productivity and reduce the need for costly social spending."

James Heckman
Nobel Laureate in Economics

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wakesmartstart.org



LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

I can still remember the gentle motion of the porch swing, while I nestled into my Aunt's arms to read *Robert the Rose Horse*. My mind swirled with images as the words painted a story of a city horse whose allergy to roses gives him all sorts of troubles, until a sneeze saves the day. In the warm security of that lap on the swing my imagination was ignited, and my love of books was born. Do I remember every word of that book? Or do I remember the caring embrace that freed my mind and imagination? Over the years I've learned children need both literacy and love to light their path in life.

Wake County SmartStart has an opportunity to light the path of life for Wake's children who need it the most. Through our collaborative work with stakeholders, we can identify challenges in the community and determine how best to support those whose circumstances in life hinder success. In my experience I have found families of all walks of life share the same hopes and dreams for their children. This is particularly true in the early years, when the future is alive with possibilities.

It's satisfying to lead a board committed to our mission, and to know the programs we fund work. However, the need in Wake far exceeds our capacity. We can be excited about our accomplishments, but we must also acknowledge these benefits and successes are not available to all that need them. With cuts of nearly 20% over the last five years, WCSS has responded by prioritizing programs for children with the most difficult circumstances and working diligently with community partners to maximize collaborations. How different our county's future would look if every child and family that needed support received it. We would all benefit.

What are we learning about Wake's children? What kind of path are we lighting for their future? The Annual Report tells that story, and captures vignettes of success in our community. As conveners in the community, we are part of an intentionally positive movement that focuses not on the deficit, but on the potential. We look for porch swing moments and foster environments for the warm embrace of that Aunt. We work with others, to provide a community light on paths and a shared outcome of positive futures.

The creak of that swing is just a memory for me now. It serves as a sweet reminder of how the joy of learning is composed of many elements, including education, opportunity and a supportive home environment. What an opportunity we have in our community to light the path, introduce children to books like *Robert the Rose Horse* and the love of learning ahead.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "G. Dale Cousins".

G. Dale Cousins
Wake County SmartStart Board Chair

Lighting the path for children is a community effort. In Fiscal Year 2012-2013 WCSS allocated \$18,665,810 to 15 local programs serving children, families and child care facilities. The Annual Report provides a narrative on how these programs and other collaborative efforts supported WCSS's goals. The Program Evaluation Report, available on WCSS's website, gives further details specific to each program.

Additionally, funds of over \$1.7 million were leveraged through five collaborative grant applications to address high priority community needs.

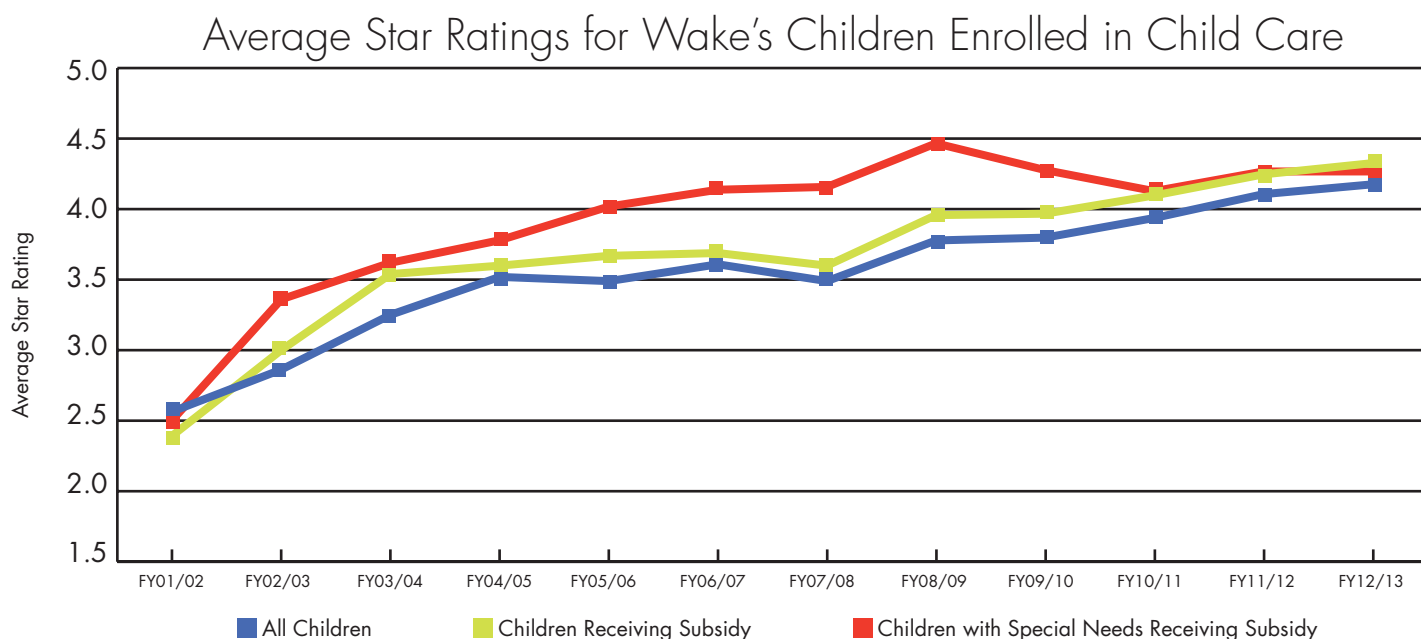
Snapshot of Wake County and its Children in Child Care

- Wake County is the second most populous county in North Carolina, with an estimated **945,143** residents, up 2% from 2011.
- There were an estimated **77,347** children, birth to five, living in Wake County in 2011.
- There were **19,289** children, birth to five, in regulated child care, about the same as in 2011. This figure represents approximately 25% of all children birth to five in Wake County.
- There were **620** child care facilities in Wake County, a reduction of 3.5% from 2011 as a result of fewer licensed Family Child Care Homes.

Wake County is generally considered a resource rich county. There are, however, significant numbers of young children with limited resources:

- In 2012 there were 13,595 young **children living in poverty**, or **17.5%**. This percentage is relatively unchanged from 2011.
- There were an estimated 32,868 young children in Wake County eligible for Medicaid in 2012, **up 6% from 2011**.
- As of January 2013, 5,349 children birth to five received child care subsidy, an increase of 5.3% from the prior year. **Over 5,400 children whose families qualified for child care subsidy remained on the waiting list and were not served.**

How does the work of WCSS contribute to the needs of Wake's children and families? One area of impact is child care quality:



*Star ratings are NC's measure of quality care (1-5 star ratings, with 5 being the highest).
The quality of child care has increased dramatically since 2001 for all children in regulated facilities.*

Sources: NC State Demographer, NC DCDEE, US Census, NC Division of Medical Assistance

Children are Safe, Healthy and Live in Supportive Environments



The right environment for the growing child matters. The early years are a period of rapid brain development. It's hard to learn if you are hungry, or if you are worried about where you will sleep at night...or worse, that nighttime brings the fear of violence erupting in your home. A nurturing home environment fosters healthy development in young children. However, with 17.5% of Wake's young children living in poverty, circumstances strain emotional and financial resources such that for many, there is little energy left for nurturing.

The early years are an important period of development. Nearly 90% of brain development occurs between birth and age five. The brain architecture developed during this period is what all future learning is built upon. Chronic stresses, like food insecurity, homelessness or domestic violence, are conditions that negatively affect children's development, and hinder their learning potential.

WCSS funds programs that support families in difficult conditions in order to strengthen their parenting capacity, improve the health of the child and increase opportunities for learning.

Wake County SmartStart works to support safe and healthy living environments by:

- Helping parents link to resources that address child health and developmental needs.
- Creating an efficient system of access to care and education for those in need of home-based services.
- Funding individualized home-based parent education to support positive parent-child interaction and promote health and well-being.
- Prioritizing families that need it most – families that have the fewest resources and most challenging circumstances.

Program Highlights:

- 5,800 home visits were provided. Visits included parent education, assessments and referrals when needed.
- In the Nurse Family Partnership home visiting program, 86% of the babies born since the program began were born at a healthy birth weight, an early indicator of child health and development.
- Over 1,400 children and their families participated in programs that support Kindergarten readiness, parenting knowledge and skills, family literacy and child social and emotional development.
- 1,087 developmental screenings were provided to children.

Contributing to County Outcomes:

Home visiting programs are an effective way to link parents to needed services for their children. In 2013, almost 6% of children, birth through age 2 in Wake County received Early Intervention services, increasing their potential for success. This steadily increasing indicator means children are being identified earlier, when intervention can be most effective.

Collaboration Connections:

Families that need home-based services often feel overwhelmed by the process of finding the right program for their child's need. Three years ago, WCSS and the Local Interagency Coordinating Council brought together stakeholders to detangle the process of matching those that needed home-based services with appropriate programs. With the funding support of the John Rex Endowment, this collaborative laid the groundwork for creating a "no wrong door" system for parents seeking help and agencies providing support to families. WCSS hired a project coordinator and formalized the initiative into the program now called Wake Connections. It is a centralized, coordinated *Intake and Referral* system that matches pregnant women, young children and their families with home-based services that best fit their needs. With an expected roll-out in the summer of 2014, Wake Connections will be accessible to agencies and families through its web-based portal.

GOAL TWO

Quality Child Care is Accessible and Affordable



Wake County has come a long way when it comes to child care quality. In 2001, less than 25% of children in the county were attending child care programs with a 4 or 5 star rating. Now that figure is up to 72%. Along with partners like Project Enlightenment, Child Care Services Association and Wake County Human Services, WCSS has worked with child care providers for many years to increase the quality of care for Wake's youngest children.

As the quality of care has risen, so has the cost of child care. Many families could not afford care without the support of child care subsidy assistance.

This assistance bridges the cost of care for low income families and makes it possible for parents to work. While many families benefited from the support, 5,485 eligible children remained on the waiting list at the end of Fiscal Year 2012-2013.

WCSS ties its financial investment in subsidy to quality improvements in centers. This targeted work has increased the quality of classrooms that serve children on subsidy. In 2001, barely 10% of children receiving subsidy support were in high quality classrooms – compared to over 80% in 2012. Today more children experience higher quality education while being supported through subsidy assistance, however the issue of affordability remains.

Wake County SmartStart supports the need for accessible and affordable high quality child care by:

- Providing subsidized payments to child care facilities who serve children enrolled in high quality care.
- Improving health, safety and classroom environment ratings through trainings and assessments.
- Providing training and support to licensed child care facilities in order to maintain and improve their star ratings, NC's measure of quality child care.
- Encouraging teacher-child interactions through connections with nurturing adults.





Program Highlights:

- WCSS provided child care subsidy assistance to 4 or 5 star centers serving 1,553 children, birth to five.
- Quality supplements were paid on behalf of 3,800 children to programs in order to maintain high quality care and bridge the cost of care.
- Over 14,500 children birth to five attended centers that benefited from WCSS programs, representing approximately 75% of all children birth to five in child care.

SUCCESS STORY

Being able to share your emotions through words is part of the important communication skills developed as a child. The inability to use language to express emotions may create frustration that affects a child's ability to learn. While expressing feelings comes as second nature to most adults, it's actually a communication skill learned in early childhood. Here is an example, submitted by a classroom consultant, of how building communicating skills empowers children to express themselves and ask for what they need:

"When a young boy was accidentally hit by another child's elbow during circle time, he began to cry. After some reassurance from the teacher, both the child and teacher decided he needed a cold compress. When the teacher called the front office for an ice pack, the child chimed in that he needed it "for emotional support". By expressing his needs fully, and receiving appropriate support, the child, the teacher and the class could move forward to their next activity with less disruption to learning."

Quality Enhancement Specialist, WCSS

Being able to express emotions in words is one example of "functional skills" – skills that will help this future adult be a better worker, manager, or leader. The teacher was using skills learned through *Social and Emotional Early Development for Quality Child Care Program* (SEED) from the Lucy Daniels Center. SEED promotes social emotional development training with child care center staff, so that they in turn can enhance such development in the children they serve. WCSS is a collaborator on the SEED initiative, funded by the John Rex Endowment.

GOAL THREE

Children are Ready for Kindergarten



What makes a child ready for Kindergarten? WCSS's priorities highlight the ingredients for success. Children need safe and healthy living environments. Families need access to quality care and education for their children that is affordable.

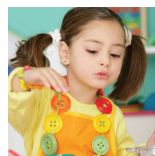
Wake County enjoys a strong array of options for those that can afford it, but for many the options are few. Nearly 40% of children that attended Wake's public schools qualified for free or reduced priced lunch in 2012, indicating financial challenges in the home. WCSS funded programs to support these children prior to their entrance into Kindergarten, and help level the playing field for those with extraordinary burdens.

By bringing high quality early education to those who ordinarily would not be able to afford it, more children enter Kindergarten with the skills needed to learn.

Whether it's at home or in the classroom, quality early care and education provides the foundations for future academic success.

Wake County SmartStart encourages Kindergarten readiness in young children by:

- Providing high quality early childhood education through the NC Pre-Kindergarten program to eligible children.
- Encouraging parents to read at home with their children, offering early literacy support and guidance.
- Sharing school readiness information and activities with children and parents to support the transition to Kindergarten.
- Increasing parents' ability to address their children's social and emotional development.





Program Highlights:

- Over 1,200 four-year-olds attended a high quality preschool through the NC Pre-Kindergarten program. Children with multiple risk factors were prioritized for services.
- Through various WCSS funded programs, there were 3,475 consultations or trainings provided in child care settings. Topics included improving health and safety practices, supporting early literacy, information on child development and improving child care quality.
- 729 classroom mentoring visits were provided by the WCSS funded LINKS (Literacy Invites and Nurtures Kids' Success) program with Motherhead. In child care centers, teachers implemented new early literacy strategies and skills and encouraged parents with ideas on how to nurture pre-literacy skills at home.
- WCSS funded program Supporting School Readiness showed positive outcomes for those participating in their Summer Enrichment Program. The program trained preschool classroom teachers on techniques to enhance school readiness in the classroom and helped over 300 children get ready for Kindergarten through workshops with their families.

Contributing to Community Outcomes

Supportive family environments, strong Pre-K programs, services for those in need – these elements together have been contributing to the rise in the Kindergarten Initial Assessment (KIA) scores for Wake County. The KIA provided a standard to track children's readiness as they entered public school. WCSS believes NC Pre-K and its other important community programs contributed to the increase in readiness of today's kindergartners.

SUCCESS STORY

How effective is NC Pre-K in preparing children for Kindergarten? Here is what one Wake County Kindergarten teacher had to say:

*"Children that attend NC Pre-K come in with an understanding of academics, a sense of structure and community. NC Pre-K is so important to NC schools in order to continue our success in education, especially with Common Core in place! I worked in NC Pre-K for nine years and I am currently teaching Kindergarten. I have always been an advocate for this program but now I see just how important it is for success in Kindergarten and throughout education. **My students in my Kindergarten class who have been in NC Pre-K are some of the highest scoring children in the class! What a beneficial program!!**"*

Wake County Kindergarten Teacher

Collaborations



Community Collaboration is a core value of Wake County SmartStart.

Wake County SmartStart is just one of several organizations that seek to improve the lives of young children in Wake County. WCSS works closely with community agencies and the child care community to support and facilitate collaboration among providers of services to young children and their families. The needs in Wake County are beyond the capacity of any one organization. Collaboration ensures resources are used effectively, prevents duplication and expands service capacity. Collaboration is also where new visions, ideas and practices can be piloted and evaluated.

In Fiscal Year 2012-2013 WCSS worked with community partners on five collaborative grants funded by the John Rex Endowment. The development of these grants in partnership with other community organizations provided additional resources to address existing needs. As an outcome of the collaborations, critical resources were leveraged and expanded. Below are examples of two successful collaborative efforts addressing health and wellness in young children.

Farm to Child Care

WCSS, Advocates for Health in Action (AHA) and Wake County Cooperative Extension worked together to bring local produce for snacks and meals to child care centers serving low-income children through the **Farm to Child Care** initiative. WCSS helped identify centers that would be good demonstration sites for this new program. Seven hundred children and staff in Wake County centers enjoyed a variety of locally grown produce through the Farm to Child Care pilot. Raleigh Nursery School was one of eight centers that participated in the nine-week pilot in Wake County, serving 90 children. The center grew vegetables in their playground, and learned from farmers firsthand the names and flavors of vegetables. Farmer Bennie Glenn of Genesis Farm in Holly Springs delivered locally grown produce weekly to Raleigh Nursery School and several other centers for the pilot. The initiative will continue to build on its early success as it prepares for the next growing season in Wake.

Preventing Obesity by Design

Children's play environments can be transformed to encourage more physical activity, and create a stronger connection to healthy foods by growing produce on-site. NCSU's Natural Learning Initiative is addressing Wake County's early childhood obesity epidemic with their innovative **Preventing Obesity by Design** in Wake County (POD-Wake) program. POD-Wake created best practice demonstration sites focused on converting playgrounds into active, productive Outdoor Learning Environments (OLEs). POD-Wake's goal of creating interactive, edible OLEs will expand with each growing season.

WCSS supports sustainable programs to create real impact in the community. With these two programs, WCSS worked to get child care centers engaged in creative planning sessions, as demonstration sites, and provided program consultation and technical assistance.



Partners, Programs and Collaborations

CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF THE DIOCESE OF RALEIGH, INC.

- School Readiness Services for Hispanic Children

LUCY DANIELS CENTER FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD

- Social/Emotional Interventions for Young Children: SecurePath

MOTHEREAD, INC.

- Literacy Invites and Nurtures Kids' Success

PROJECT ENLIGHTENMENT

- Parents as Teachers Home Visiting Program
- Supporting School Readiness

SAFECHILD

- The Nurturing Parenting Program for Spanish Speaking Families

SALVATION ARMY

- Project CATCH

REACH OUT AND READ

- Reach Out and Read at New Bern Ridge Pediatrics – partial year

TELAMON CORPORATION

- Telamon Corporation NC Head Start Family Literacy Program

WAKE COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES

- Child Care Health Consultant Program
- Child Care Financial Assistance for Families
- Nurse Family Partnership

WAKE COUNTY SMARTSTART

- NC Pre-Kindergarten Program
- Program Coordination and Evaluation
- Quality Enhancement and Maintenance Initiative in Child Care Facilities



Community Collaborations

LOCAL INTERAGENCY COORDINATING COUNCIL

- Planning Grant for Wake Connections

NATURAL LEARNING INITIATIVE AT NC STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF DESIGN

- Preventing Obesity by Design – Wake County

LUCY DANIELS CENTER FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD

- Project SEED (Social and Emotional Early Development for Child Care Quality)

ADVOCATES FOR HEALTH IN ACTION

- Farm to Child Care

Volunteers and Donors

The path for children is lit by many! Wake County SmartStart thanks all the volunteers, donors, staff and board members that contribute to the mission of preparing young children for success in school and in life.

VOLUNTEERS

Natasha Adwaters	Jennifer Deans	Valerie Horton	Carol Mitchell	Sue Russell
Sandra Aguilar	Titania Delgado	Kim Hughes	Cathy Q. Moore	Tiffany Russell
Nichelle Allen	Carolyn Dickens	Katherine Hutchens	Irma Moore	Eneisha Sambrano
Nannette Ausby	Sandra Dietrich	Angela Jones	Barbara Morales Burke	Keisha Sanders
Jan Baker	Lorraine Dixon	Connie Kennedy	Peter Morris	Gladys Santiago
Stacey Barbee	Carolyn Driggers	Kim Knight	Brandi Nobles	Ann Sayers
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Krista Barbour	Arlene Evans	Amanda Kowski	Tiffany Outlaw	Kim Shaw
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Nell Barnes	Melinda Fox	Giang Le	Ervin Portman	Mike Smith
Claudia Beltre	Maria Garcia-Martinez	Juanita Linton	Hannah Poteat	Joe Stewart
LaKecia Benjamin	Darlene Gilchrist	Nayeli Luna	Vanessa Price	Caroline Sullivan
Marilyn Bensinger	Jim Green	Gay Lytton	Rhonda Privette	Christy Thalheimer
Dumisha Binns	Margaret Hamilton	Marcia Mandel	Ferali Puerta	Stephanie Vandergrift
Deborah Brown	Leslie Hang	Shanté Martin	Waltye Rasulala	Frances Velez
Marvin Brown	Jennifer Hansen	Sandra Martinez	Karen Ray	Lisa Ware
Summylin Burton	Cortesha Harrington	Adrienne Massey	Antoinette Richards	Portia Watson
Arvelis Byrd	Barbara Harris	Amanda Mateus-Rodriguez	Cathy Robinson	Willi Webb
Cynthia Chamblee	Erica Hayes	Susan McCullen	JeToya Robinson	Angie Welsh
Nichelle Cole	Kristen Hernandez	Beckie McGee	Joyce Robinson	Judith Weinbren
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Dawn Dawson	Pam Holt	Michele Miller-Cox	Jennifer Ruff	David Zonderman

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Acknowledgements

WRITING/EDITING

WCSS Staff

DESIGN

Sally Johns Design

Wake County SmartStart FY 2013 Financial Statements

STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS, EXPENDITURES, AND NET ASSETS - MODIFIED CASH BASIS

(Unaudited)

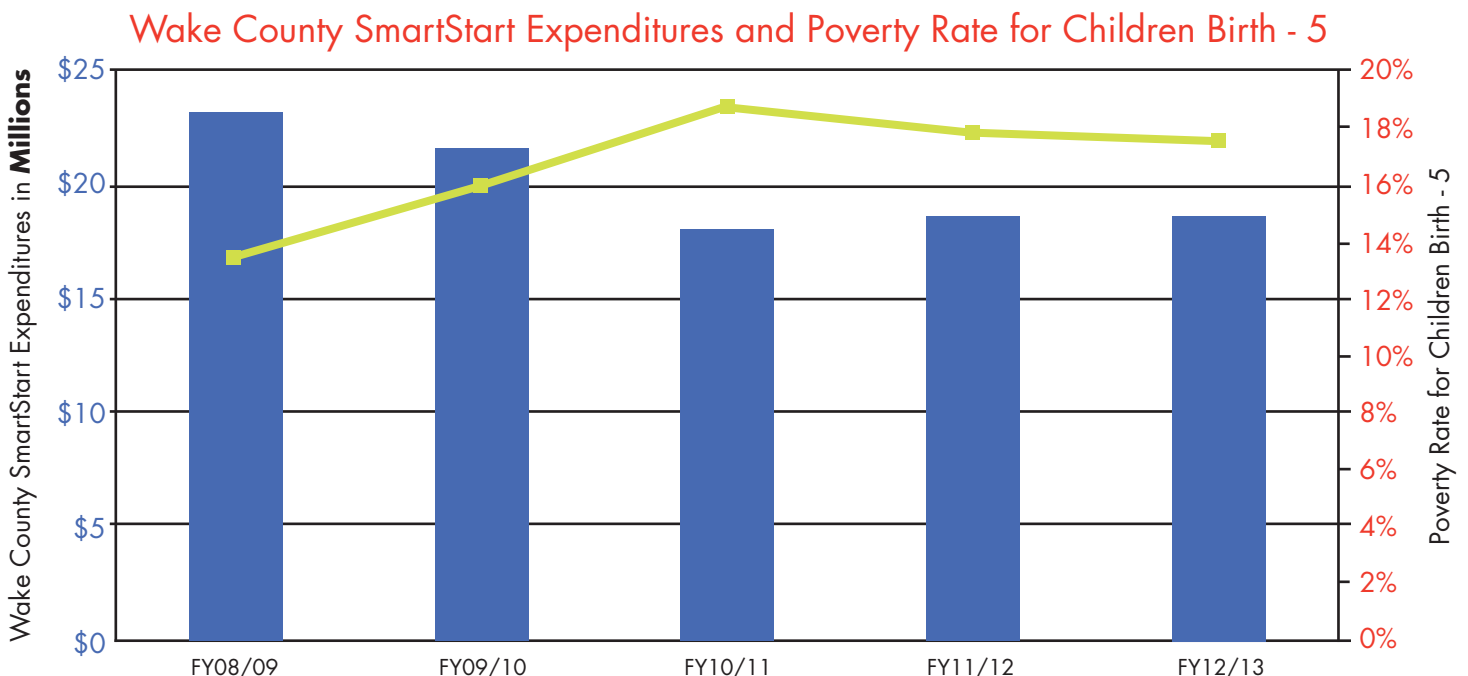
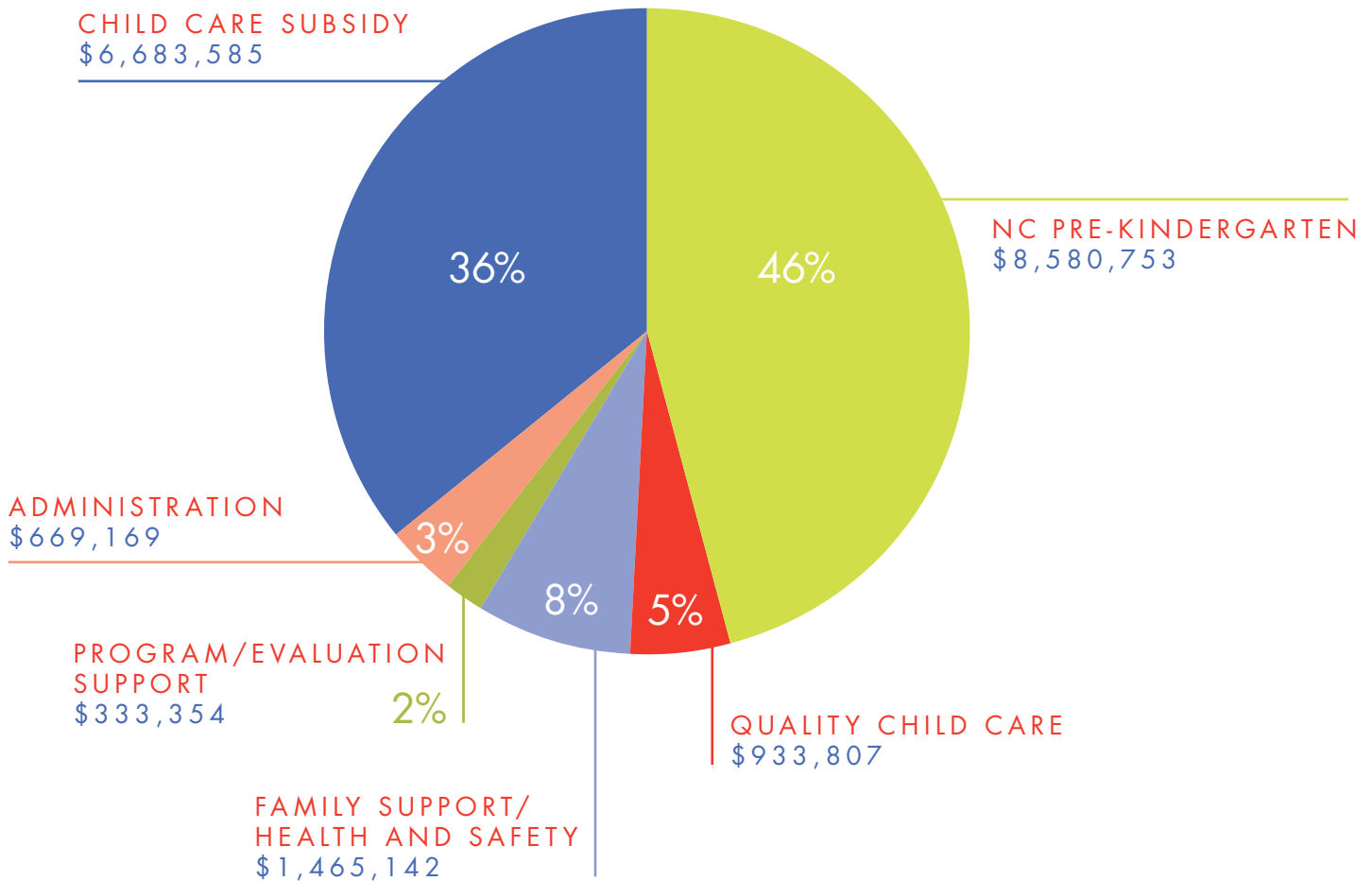
	Unrestricted Funds		Temporarily Restricted Funds	Total Funds
	Smart Start Funds	Other Funds		
Receipts:				
State Awards (less refunds of \$ (682))	\$ 6,080,860	\$ 5,795,222	\$	\$ 11,876,082
Private Contributions		6,844	97,079	103,923
Interest and Investment Earnings		5,309		5,309
Sales Tax Refunds		17,545		17,545
Other Receipts		33,860		33,860
Subtotal Receipts	\$ 6,080,860	\$ 5,858,780	\$ 97,079	\$ 12,036,719
Net Assets Released from Restrictions:				
Satisfaction of Program Restrictions		49,271	(49,271)	
Total Receipts	\$ 6,080,860	\$ 5,908,051	\$ 47,808	\$ 12,036,719
Expenditures:				
Programs:				
Child Care and Education Quality	\$ 928,640	\$ 5,167	\$	\$ 933,807
Family Support	876,740			876,740
Health and Safety	588,402			588,402
NC Pre-Kindergarten	2,991,330	5,589,423		8,580,753
Support:				
Management and General	425,464	226,247		651,711
Program Coordination and Evaluation	270,284	56,975		327,259
Other:				
Refund Prior Year Grant		6,095		6,095
Sales Tax Paid		17,458		17,458
Total Expenditures	\$ 6,080,860	\$ 5,901,365	\$	\$ 11,982,225
Excess of Receipts Over Expenditures	\$	\$ 6,686	\$ 47,808	\$ 54,494
Net Assets at Beginning of Year		1,794,371	53,988	1,848,359
Net Assets at End of Year	\$	\$ 1,801,057	\$ 101,796	\$ 1,902,853
Net Assets Consisted of:				
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 19,996	\$ 1,801,057	\$ 101,796	\$ 1,922,849
Refunds Due From Contractors	10,147			10,147
	\$ 30,143	\$ 1,801,057	\$ 101,796	\$ 1,932,996
Less: Due to State	23,871			23,871
Funds Held for Others	6,272			6,272
Net Assets at End of Year	\$	\$ 1,801,057	\$ 101,796	\$ 1,902,853

Note: During FY 2013, the NC Partnership for Children and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) entered into a contract with and made payments to a service provider selected by Wake County SmartStart. This service provider contract is not reflected on this statement, however, a summary of the service provider contract entered into by the NC Partnership for Children and DHHS is presented here:

Schedule of State Level Service Providers Contracts For the Year Ended June 30, 2013

Wake County Human Services Child Care Subsidy	\$6,683,585
Total Expenditures – Wake County SmartStart (See above)	\$11,982,225
Grand Total Expenditures by and through Wake County SmartStart	\$18,665,810

Wake County SmartStart Functional Expenditures FY 12/13



The impact of the economic downturn has reduced resources; at the same time, the number of families with young children needing support has increased. *(Figures based on the Federal Poverty Rate)*



2012–2013 Annual Report

Wake County SmartStart

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