



2018
2019

ANNUAL
REPORT

stepping stones

WAKE COUNTY



Smart Start



*Our
Mission:*

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

Stepping Stones and the Path of Change



Executive Director Gayle E. Headen (center) and WCSS Board members (L-R) Kelly Caldwell, Angie Welsh, Patricia Ruppert, Liz Hamner

So often, in the public realm as in our private life, growth and change go hand in hand. This year, Wake County Smart Start has seen leadership transitions, retirements, and internal program development. Funded programs have continued to show strong outcomes, staff have received civic honors for their community involvement, and WCSS donors have demonstrated their passion

for early childhood in Wake County more clearly than ever. Together, these moments have been stepping stones taking us further on our path to create life-changing opportunities for children, to ensure **each child, in every community, is ready for school and life.**

Perhaps most notably, we welcomed a new face at the top when Gayle E. Headen joined WCSS in February as our Executive Director, following Pam Dowdy's retirement after 18 impactful years. Gayle's new era of leadership already has a strong start as she leads us in expanding our efforts to bring parents and families even further into our work. We've used this moment of change to capitalize on opportunities for growth and further reach for young children, guided and enhanced by our participation as an early adopter of the new Family Engagement and Leadership planning grant which welcomes families to participate even more fully as partners in preparing the path to success for their children. I know we will do great things for early childhood during this next step in our future, because as Gayle said, **"Working together to impact children and families is one of the smartest and most important ways we can support society."**

This past year has seen both growth and change for WCSS, and it's been my honor to share in this journey with all involved. I invite you to read through the following report highlighting the steps we took together last year. In closing, I share this quote, which has given me encouragement and bolstered my strength to advocate for Wake's youngest children. May it help light the path for you as well:

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." – Margaret Mead

ANGIE WELSH

Wake County Smart Start Board Chair



Donors 2018-19

The work of WCSS would not be possible without the support of our donors. It is with great appreciation that we recognize our community of Champions for Children:

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Christine Alvarado | | | |
| Amazon Smile Foundation | Shirley Herndon | | |
| David Aspnes | Sherry Heuser | Development and Early Education | |
| Cynthia Ball | Brenda High Sanders | North Carolina Partnership for Children | Craig & Anna Troutman |
| Phyllis Barbour | C. Blair Hogan | North State Bank | Charlotte Turpin |
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| Citrix | Johnnie Jones III | Policy Equity Group | Michael & Rosemary Wasilick |
| Sharon Clauss | Charles Kronberg | Hannah Poteat | Wells Fargo Foundation |
| Dale Cousins | Mark Langford | Patricia Ruppert | Angie Welsh |
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| Foundations for the Carolinas | Cathy Moore | Jane Stikeleather | |
| Meagan & Grant Gill | Barbara Morales Burke | Suzanne Stroud | |
| Liz Hamner | Jack Nichols | Kristi Tally | |
| David & Kella Hatcher | North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Child | Virginia Tally | |
| Brandon Hedgepeth | | | |

* Shape NC: Healthy Starts for Young Children, an initiative of Smart Start and BCBSNC Foundation, funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service, Social Innovation Fund

Wake County Smart Start (WCSS) works every day to help young children find the step to success on their path to adulthood. Through interconnected partnerships, programs, and initiatives, our work influences children, birth to age five, across Wake County.

Using a strategic plan to guide the **stepping stones** for system-wide improvements and individual program goals, WCSS looks ahead to create the opportunities needed by young children and their families. This report documents the ways our donors, partners, volunteers, and staff have helped grow those openings for change this past year.

WCSS uses four Goal Areas to fund and evaluate the programs and services providing comprehensive supports for young children:



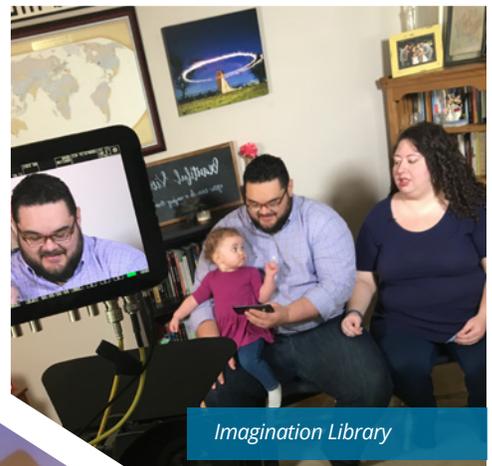
Additionally, we recognize that some children face life's challenges with distinct and unique disadvantages. In Wake County, nearly 33% of children live in poverty, which has deep and far-reaching impacts on healthy development. To acknowledge and address this issue, WCSS uses a "greatest need" lens through which the agency prioritizes services for our community members who may most benefit from more equitable access and support.



Kids Educational Center III - Wake Forest



Rep. Julie von Haefen at A Safe Place



Imagination Library



Wakefield Creative Schools



Children are in safe, supportive home environments.

A strong foundation at home can smooth a child's path to success. **Last year, WCSS funding increased home visits to over 8,500, bringing important support to the earliest stages of learning for children and families.**

“I saw how my own mother struggled raising two children on her own. I'm excited to raise my child in a place of my own!”

- Renée, new mother, homeowner, and Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) client. Renée's NFP team helped her build a home through Habitat for Humanity. **NFP celebrated their 10th anniversary in Wake County in 2019, and since they enrolled their first mother in 2009, they have served 545 mothers, seen 410 babies be born, and conducted 13,941 home visits.**



“This is great work. Partnering with CCHC has allowed us to be confident in the accuracy of our work so we can direct more attention to other details of our programming for young children. We know that these immunization processes are now complete and done right, and we appreciate the help in supporting our families.”

- Kim Shaw, Director at A Safe Place Early Learning Center, a recipient of the new program from Child Care Health Consultants (CCHC) offering help and training on children’s immunization files and record keeping. The vaccinations initiative, spearheaded and funded by the County, represents one way WCSS-funded programs like CCHC integrate in larger initiative work within their current plan of work. Efforts such as these help raise quality and further improve and integrate our system of care. **In the first year of this program, 82 Wake County child care centers participated, bringing their records up to date, changing policies, and improving communication with parents.**



Children are in high quality care that contributes to positive child outcomes.

After the home, a child care center or early childhood classroom is often where a young child spends the majority of their time, taking steps toward academic, health, social, and emotional development. **Nearly 16,000 children benefit from WCSS-funded programs that improve quality at the centers they attend, making up 66% of all children in licensed care.** Higher quality care means fewer obstacles for young children as they learn and explore the world around them.





Children are healthy and developmentally ready for school.

The first day of Kindergarten is a momentous day for many families, signifying the start of a journey to high school graduation and adulthood - but so much learning takes place even before that first day. **Nearly 35% of Wake County third graders do not read at grade level, and WCSS supports programs that can change this.** Full and rich opportunities to love learning, including reading, are integral to starting Kindergarten strong.



Cooper and Isla

“Cooper enjoys showing his sister, Isla, how reading works. He has read some of these books so many times he can ‘read’ them back to me!”

- Kyle, father of Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library members and enthusiastic readers Cooper and Isla. Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library enrolled 20,655 young readers and mailed 205,774 books in FY18-19 in Wake County. **In January 2019, the one millionth book was mailed to Imagination Library members across the state.**

HIPPY



56%

of family units submitting applications included a pregnant or postpartum mother (217 moms)



Children and families are supported by a strong, diverse, integrated early childhood system.

Having the vantage point of a funder, administrator, and advocate gives us a unique position to hear many issues in the early childhood system. The ability to act on these concerns and convene with our community to impact change is empowering, and it is an important piece driving our mission forward.

“ Big, big value that saves time and money. ”

The impact on our community when our youngest children and families struggle is a challenge we see in every program we support. That’s why Wake Connections, WCSS’s online service linkage system, is so important, because it brings together programs and services across the county in one easy access point. Many programs specifically focus on expecting mothers and children in the first year of their lives, providing prenatal and postpartum support, parenting skills, and child development services to those most vulnerable in our community.



Language is the Key

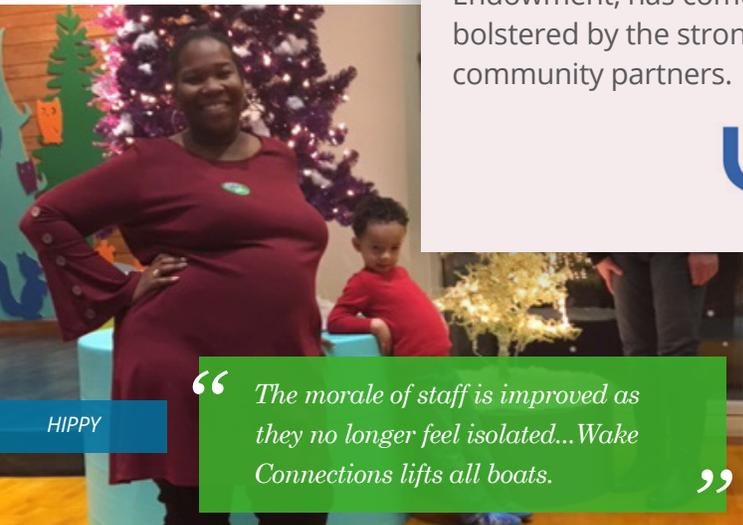
“ A strong pipeline that works. ”



62%

of Wake Connections applicants in 18-19 were prenatal - 3 years old

What started out as a dream that families in need could have one entry point to access services across the continuum of early childhood, initially funded by John Rex Endowment, has come to fruition in Wake Connections, bolstered by the strong, grassroots work of all its community partners.



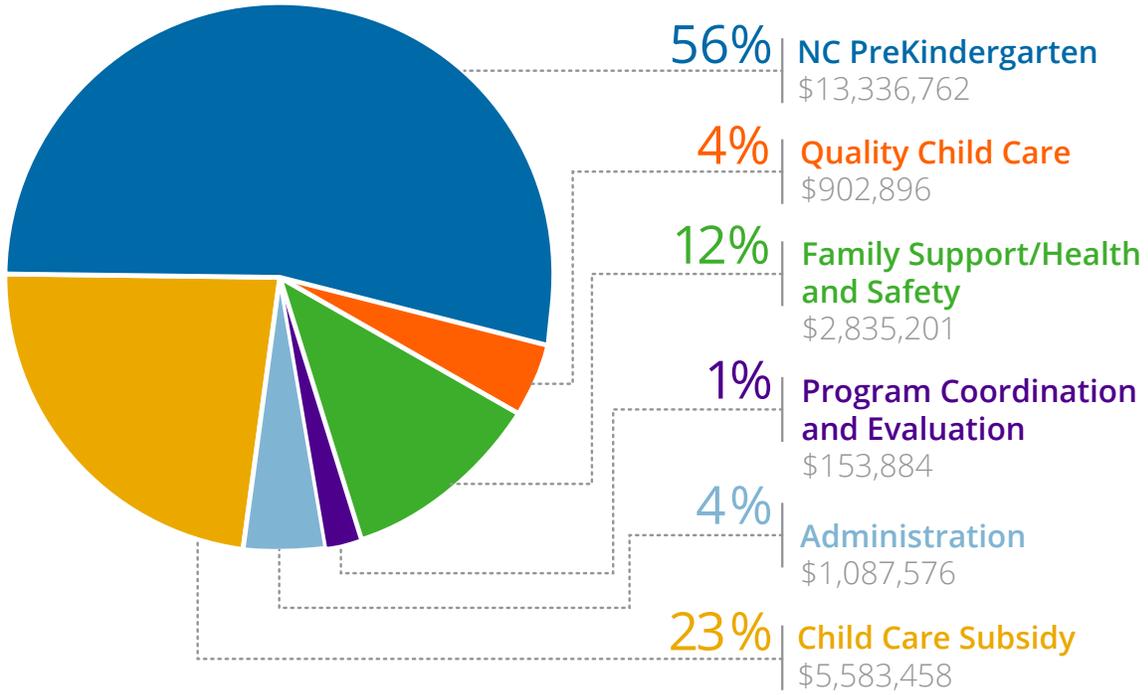
HIPPY

“ The morale of staff is improved as they no longer feel isolated...Wake Connections lifts all boats. ”

86%

of applicants eligible for referral in 18-19 were expecting or mothers with a child in the first year of their life

Wake County Smart Start Functional Expenditures FY 18/19



Imagination Library Six Before Sunset



Renée Chou and daughter Elsa



WCCS Staff

Partners, Programs, & Collaborative Projects 2018-19

CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF THE DIOCESE OF RALEIGH

- Language is the Key
- School Readiness Services for Hispanic Children & Families

CHILD CARE SERVICES ASSOCIATION

- Advancing School Readiness

COMMUNITY CARE OF WAKE AND JOHNSTON COUNTIES

- Assuring Better Child Health & Development Program (ABCD)

FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER SOUTH ATLANTIC

- Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)

LUCY DANIELS CENTER

- SecurePath

SAFECHILD

- Crianza con Cariño

WAKE COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES

- Child Care Health Consultant Program
- Child Care Subsidy Program
- Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP)

WAKE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM OFFICE OF EARLY LEARNING

- Parents as Teachers Program (PAT)
- Triple P Positive Parenting

WAKE COUNTY SMART START

- Child Care Program Quality Supplements
- Dolly Parton's Imagination Library
- Farm to Child Care*
- Improving and Sustaining Quality Child Care
- NC Pre-Kindergarten
- Program Coordination & Evaluation (PCE)
- Reach Out and Read
- Shape NC: Healthy Starts for Young Children, an Initiative of Smart Start and BCBSNC Foundation**
- Systems Improvement and Public Engagement (SIPE)
- Wake Connections*

Collaborative Projects

WCSS is involved in over 20 collaboratives in Wake County. Below are examples of key collaborative engagement by goal area:

- Goal 1: Wake Connections Advisory
- Goal 2: Technical Assistance Collaborative
- Goal 3: Wake Pre-K Application Collaborative
- Goal 4: Wake Child Abuse Prevention Plan

* funded by John Rex Endowment

** funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service, Social Innovation Fund



Brett & Family



Jada



ABC Land

Staff 2018-19

Gayle E. Headen
Executive Director

Pamela J. Dowdy,
Executive Director

Gwen Adair

Phyllis Barbour

Gabrielle Barnard

Debi Bartholomew

Sue Bush

Gary Carr

Sharon Clauss

Irma Concepcion

Joan Crutchfield

Amanda Flater

Sasha Gomez

Jennifer Hoch

Shalonda Holley

Caroline Janes

Stephanie Jenkins

Kashama Leo-Henry

Bryce McClamroch

Nikki McDougald

Carol Orji

Maggie Ortiz

Nora Ostler

Taty Padilla

Nancy Peck

Lynn Policastro

Melinda Schlesinger

Gina Soceanu

Maria Soto

Anna Troutman

Noemi Vasquez

Elizabeth Weichel

Taushau Wilkinson

Liz Ziglar



Board of Directors 2018-19

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L'Teisha Curtis, Telamon Corporation

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James S. Greene, City of Raleigh

Liz Hamner, SAS

Sherry Heuser, Capability Company

Jessica Holmes, Wake County Board of Commissioners

Leslie Ann Jackson, NC Community Foundation

Mark Langford, Cisco Systems

Catherine Lassiter, Wake Technical Community College

Carol Mitchell, NC Cooperative Extension – Wake County

Cathy Moore, Wake County Public School System

Barbara Morales Burke, BlueCross and BlueShield of NC

Regina Petteway, Wake County Human Services

Patricia Ruppert, Parent

Kimberly Shaw, A Safe Place Child Enrichment Center

Mike Smith, Western Wake Pediatrics

Kristi Tally, KD7 Enterprises, Inc.

Charlotte Turpin, Community Volunteer

Michael Wasilick, Wake County Public Libraries

Angie Welsh, Chair, The Kaleidoscope Project

Joe White, NCSU Libraries

Katherine Williams, NC Cooperative Extension – Wake County

Tyrone Williamson, City of Raleigh



Volunteers 2018-19

Total Volunteer Hours: 1,641

- A** Amber Adams
Paula Adeniji
Sandra Aguilar
Shelia Alamin-Khashoggi
Angela Alger-Walker
Christine Alvarado
Monica Andrade
Scott Arnold
Dinah Arthur
Nannette Ausby
- B** Sanford Bailey
Jan Baker
Stacey Barbee
Chandra Barbour
Krista Barbour
Mamta Batra
Connie Batten
Claudia Beltre
Dumisha Binns
Susan Blaeser
Deanna Bledsoe
Freda Bonilla
Nicole Boone
Theresa Boozer-Turner
Latasha Boyles
Kelli Bradley
Ashley Bran
Cassandra Brooks
Janae Brown
Marvin Brown
Paula Brown
Tracy Brown
Corinne Brylski
James Bullock
Annie Butler
Melissa Butler
Candice Bynum
- C** Kelly Caldwell
Bridgette Campbell
Candace Capers
Justin Casper
Linda Chappell
Anne (Daisy) Clemmons
Samone Cole
Kellie Cook
- Natalie Cook
Karla Cooper
Dale Cousins
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L'Teisha Curtis
- D** Elaina Datcher
Dawn Dawson
Titania Delgado
Jeanne Demmel
Freda Dixon
Lorraine Dixon
Heather Drennan
Belinda Dunster
- E** Eleisa Edgecombe
Pamela Edwards
Ginger Espino
Aisha Eugene
Arlene Evans
Michele Ezzell
- F** Crystal Felton
Maty Ferrer Hoppmann
Alberta Forney
Ajeenah Fourean
Zoila Franco
LaShawn Freeman
Shoshana Funk
- G** Tammy Gatling
Julie Glasgon
Matthew Glova
Maite Gonzalez
Stephanie Gore
Elizabeth Grannis
Perin Grant
James Greene Jr.
JeVonica Greenwood
Billy Greer
Paula Gremillion
Devenda Griffith
Monnie Griggs
- H** Margaret Hamilton
Tracy Hamilton
Liz Hamner
Jim Hansen
Carolyn Harbertson
Loretta Harper-Arnold
Suzannah Harrelson
Cortesha Harrington
Sheronda Harris
Jessica Hawkins
Danielle Hayes
Holli Hemb
Brenda Hemi
Valerie Hernandez
Sherry Heuser
Michelle Hirsch
Charlotte Holliday
Caroline Holloway
Jessica Holmes
Pam Holt
JoAnn Honeycutt
Valerie Horton
Lisa Horton-Burt
Marsha Humphrey
Vanessa Hunt
Sasha Hunter
Katherine Hutchens
- J** Leslie Ann Jackson
Wanda Jarren
Aisha Jenkins
Irene Jimenez
Mo Johnson
Robin Johnson
Carolyn Jones
Dekeita Jones
Keyna Jones
Nakisha Jones
David Juarez
Georgette Jung
Tom Jung
- K** Jacqueline Kehinde
Connie Kennedy
Sharon Klingemaier
Kimberly Knight
Amanda Kowski
- L** Debi La Vine
Shirley Lacy
Mark Langford
Catherine Lassiter
Teresa Leak
Meredith Leftwich
Steven Leonard
Elizabeth Lester
Marshea Lewis Gould
Karissa Livingston
Laney Lowe
Rosita Lugo
Wanda Lyons-Boone
- M** Dayshaliz Maldonado
Shalika Marable
Veronica Marmaud
Arturo Marshall
Janet Marshall
Rene Marshall
Carol Martin
Decora Martin
Karina Martinez
Sandra Martinez
Amanda Mateous
Morgan Matthews
Takeasia McArn
Paula McCowan
Lisa McCoy
Beckie McGee
Bryan McIntyre
Kelsy McLamb
Kristen Meacham
Christine Meadows
Shana Meadows
Susana Menjivar Rodriguez
Nicole Miller
Carol Mitchell
Barbara Moore
Cathy Moore
Christa Moore
Barbara Morales Burke
Brittany Morgan
Bettie Murchison
Shaunta Murff
Luis Murria



Schmaltz, Inc. Volunteers

N Georgiana Nderia
Deborah Nesbitt-Harris
Jack Nichols
Andrea Nixon
Heather Noe

O Maria Ochoa
Barbara Orton-Hull

P Solange Paku
Ronetta Pearsall
Harrison Peatross, Jr.
Ruth Peebles
Kimberly Peebles
Elisa Penn
Jenny Petrou
Regina Petteway
Giosha Pierre-Louis
Likeida Pillot
Tarkisha Poole
Jane Pope
Hannah Poteat
Jessica Price
Luisa Price
Senova Price
Rhonda Privette
Ferali Puerta
Michelle Putterman

R Donnell Ragan
Yennifer Ramirez
Patrice Ramsey
Deanna Randle
Waltye Rasulala
Karen Ray
LaShannie Reid
Carolyn Rivera
Joyce Robinson
Latoya Robinson
Anita Robinson-Christian
Julia Rodriguez
Natasha Rodriguez
Sara Rubin
Patricia Ruppert

S Eneisha Sambrano
Gladys Santiago
Michelle Saudo
Erin Joyce Scoggins
Stephannie Senegal
Kimberly Shaw
Alison Silver
Christopher Silvestrini
LeAnne Simpkins
Mike Slawter
Krista Smith
Mia Smith
Mike Smith
Rachel Smith
Nancy Spencer
Carol Spruill
Janice Squires
Cheryl Stephenson
Barbara Stevens
Taylor Sullivan

T Kristi Tally
Shonda Tamez
Doris Taylor Battle
Lisa Terry
Karla Theobald
Lidia Tiller
Laura Tirado
Edquisha Tooles
Joy Turner
Charlotte Turpin
Lube Tyer

V Martina Van Gelderen
Venus VanBuren
Bianca Vilanova
Mayra Vitela

W Robin Warfield
Kristina Washington
Michael Wasilick
Angie Welsh
Katrina Whisonant
Joe White
Shantel White
Antionette Williams

Beverly Williams
Katherine Williams
Regina Williams
Beverly Wilson
Kim Wimberly
Helen Winter
Ashley Winters

Y Nikki Young
Shirley Young

Z Hilda Zimmer
Jimmy Zuniga



BB&T and Donate Sport

Each of WCSS's 22 funded programs represent change and growth happening in Wake. From the families creating a warm and loving home environment, to the professionals bringing postpartum support and early literacy instruction directly where they are needed, to the policy makers shaping the systems of support, to the donors contributing their money and their time to build the stepping stones for the future, we share the same goal: seeing our children succeed. Thank you to all who are changing the world one child at a time.



Wells Fargo at Shaw University Center for Early Education



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Wake County Smart Start is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Writing/Editing: Elizabeth Weichel

Design: Winnow Creative



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