



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

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



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



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

David Aspnes

Cynthia Ball

Phyllis Barbour

Marsha Basloe

Patti Beardsley

Kelly Caldwell

Gary Carr

Citrix

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Wake Stone Corporation

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Angie Welsh

Joe White

Patty Williams

Tyrone Williamson

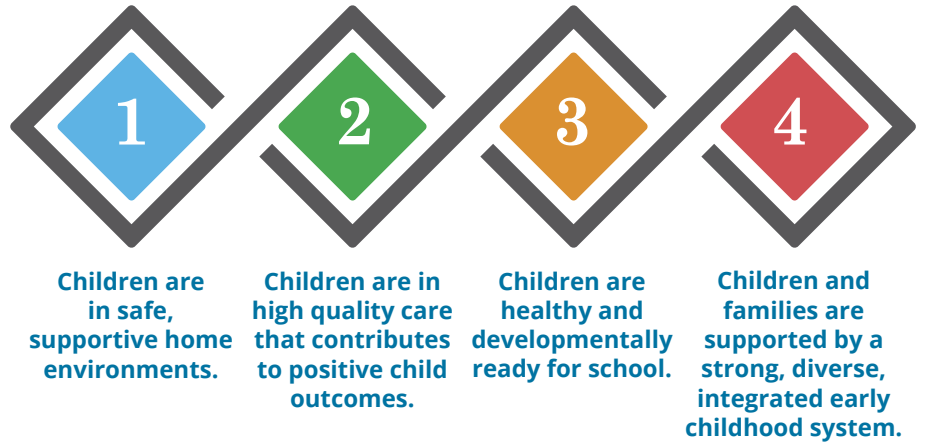
David Zonderman

* 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

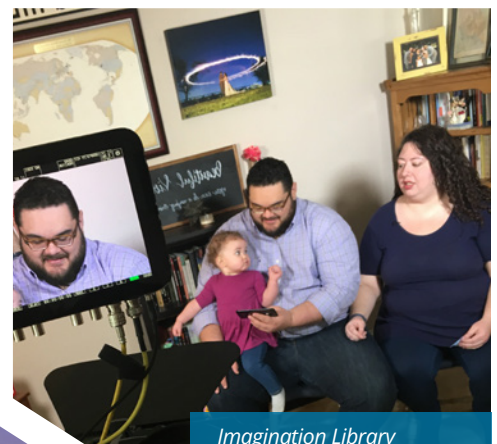
Wake County Smart Start (WCSS) works every day to help young children find the step to success on their path to adulthood. Through interconnected partnerships, programs, and initiatives, our work influences children, birth to age five, across Wake County.

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.





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!”

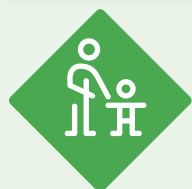
- Renée, new mother, homeowner, and Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) client. Renée's NFP team helped her build a home through Habitat for Humanity. **NFP celebrated their 10th anniversary in Wake County in 2019, and since they enrolled their first mother in 2009, they have served 545 mothers, seen 410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



NFP Staff & Renée at Home

“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 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.**



Cooper and Isla

HIPPY



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

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.

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.

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.



86% of applicants eligible for referral in 18-19 were expecting or mothers with a child in the first year of their life

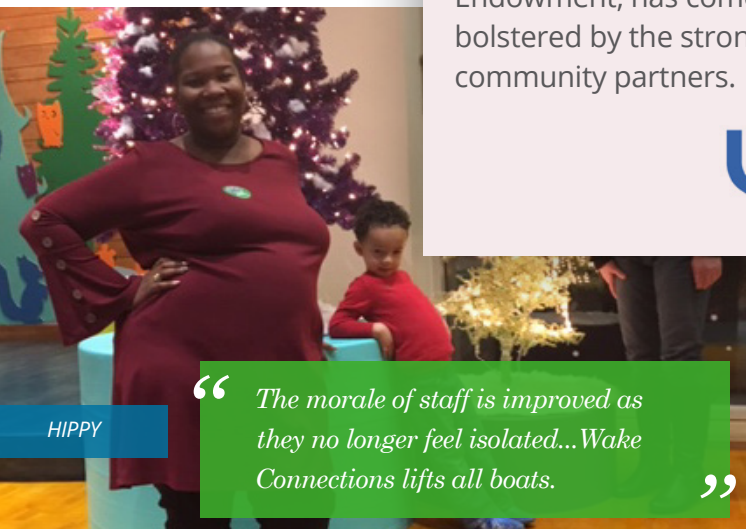
Language is the Key



“ A strong pipeline that works. ”



62% of Wake Connections applicants in 18-19 were prenatal - 3 years old

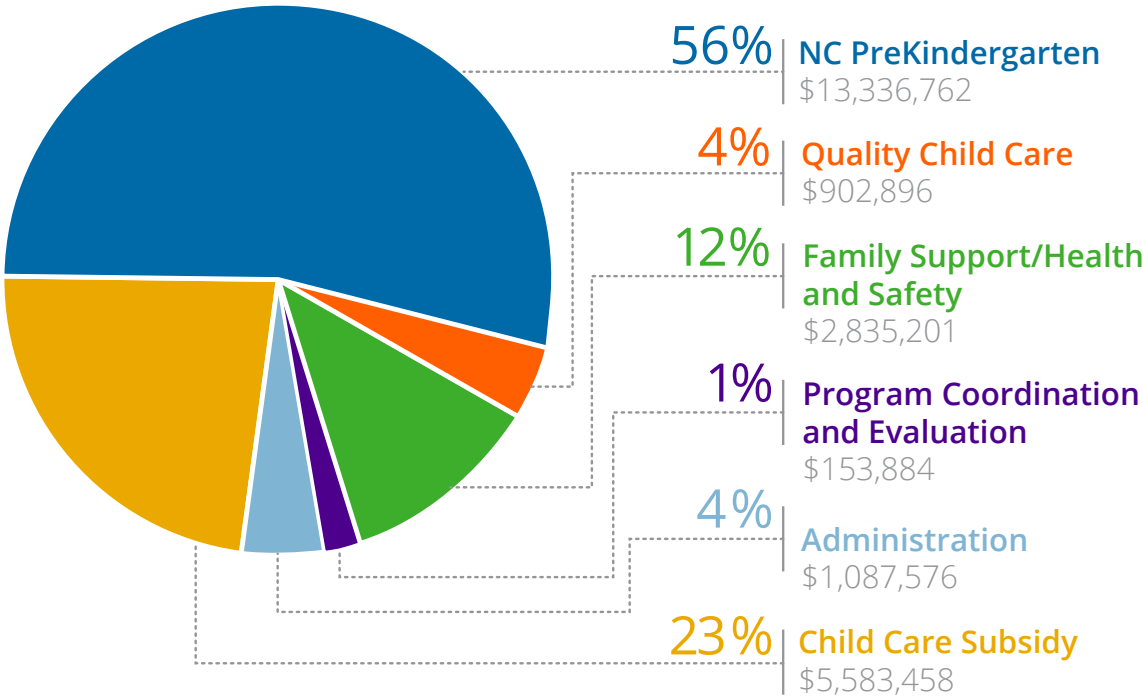


HIPPY

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



Wake County Smart Start Functional Expenditures FY 18/19



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

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Melinda Schlesinger

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Maria Soto

Anna Troutman

Noemi Vasquez

Elizabeth Weichel

Taushau Wilkinson

Liz Ziglar



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Catherine Lassiter, Wake Technical Community College

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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		Natalie Cook Karla Cooper Dale Cousins Karla Crowder Jennifer Crudup L'Teisha Curtis	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	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	
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	D	Elaina Datcher Dawn Dawson Titania Delgado Jeanne Demmel Freda Dixon Lorraine Dixon Heather Drennan Belinda Dunster			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	
C	Kelly Caldwell Bridgette Campbell Candace Capers Justin Casper Linda Chappell Anne (Daisy) Clemmons Samone Cole Kellie Cook	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	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	
		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	K	Jacqueline Kehinde Connie Kennedy Sharon Klingemaier Kimberly Knight Amanda Kowski			



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
Waltie 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
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Laura Tirado
Edquisha Toolles
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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



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.





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

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