



On August 13th, University of Mount Olive students enrolled in "Curriculum and Methods of Teaching Young Children" and Dr. Sandra Plater-Potter made a field trip to Ms. Jackie's Place in Vanceboro to tour the family child care home and outdoor learning environment. The primary objective of the field trip was to see how the classroom can be brought outside, providing children with learning experiences in a natural environment, while at the same time including language, motor, cognitive, social-emotional and self-help skills. After seeing the unique outdoor learning environment at Ms Jackie's Place, the UMO students all agreed that the visit was most enlightening in their study of teaching young children.



Raising a Reader (RAR) is our newest Smart Start-funded program. RAR is a research-based family engagement and early literacy program for children age 0-8. The goal of RAR is to help families develop, practice, and maintain home-based literacy routines that are necessary for future school success. RAR will be implemented in two Craven County centers, Little Blessings Child Care and Child Care Network #77. On September 16th RAR Coordinator Nadia Lowe (holding the RAR book bag) conducted an introductory training session for staff from these centers at Craven Smart Start.



Children enrolled at New Adventure Family Child Care Home and provider Merri Banks try out some of the portable play equipment that Ms. Banks received through her participation in the NAP SACC program in the spring. Ms. Banks says, "NAP SACC has helped her program tremendously. I've added more gross motor activities for outside and serve more fresh fruit and veggies and less of the processed stuff for the children and my family."



Parents and children learn while having fun at the first weekly Play and Learn Kindermusik session held in the Trent Court Housing Authority Auditorium. A big thank you to the Housing Authority of the City of New Bern for the use of their space and to Cheryl Harris and Twanna Smith for contacting parents about the sessions.

We still host our Play and Learn Kindermusik sessions for children and parents at our Resource Lending Library located at 2111F Neuse Blvd. in New Bern—they're now weekly. Space is limited. Call Bianca at 672-5921 (Ext. 32).

MISSION STATEMENT:

To ensure that every child, birth to five, in Craven County receives the education, health and family support necessary to arrive at school healthy and ready to succeed.

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Ms. Jackie's Place

A letter to the Editor of the Sun Journal

By Joshua Byrd

Editor's Note: Periodically, Craven Smart Start uses this page to share commentaries regarding early childhood issues. We are very pleased to share this letter, which recognizes one of our Craven County family child care home providers. The letter appeared in the Sun Journal on September 10, 2015.

As an undergraduate student enrolled in the Early Childhood Education program at the University of Mount Olive in New Bern, I have had the opportunities to explore a multitude of learning environments including public and private schools, private daycare centers, and home-based childcare facilities. Our professor, Dr. Sandra Plata-Potter, believes that the future childcare professionals and teachers she mentors should not only demonstrate proficiency in the several theories regarding early childhood development, but should also be provided with real-world learning opportunities. To expose my cohort and I to a truly unique and effective learning environment, Dr. Potter arranged a guided tour of Ms. Jackie's Place, a family home childcare center in Vanceboro, North Carolina; a learning environment unlike any other we have observed thus far.

Upon entering the backyard play area, I was awestruck at the apparent effort and forethought that was necessary to create such a vibrant and stimulating environment. Ms. Jackie has designed the layout of the children's learning area so well that the children have seamless learning stations that are available to them at will. Using a child-lead approach, the centers are all easily visible, created with safe and organic materials, and designed to stimulate the children's physical, cognitive, and social-emotional abilities while promoting autonomy. Included in the backyard area are gardens with a wash station that is plumbed to recycle the excess water by way of an integrated watering system that runs the length of each flower bed and vegetable garden. While interacting with nature in this manner, the children are taught to respect, conserve, appreciate, and share our resources. Other centers in the backyard area include a quiet reading area, Earth-science discovery center, and an obstacle course used for physical therapy.

The indoor area of Ms. Jackie's Place is no less impressive. With every available square footage used with purpose, the interior of the facility is equipped with dramatic play, literacy, science, and mathematical materials that are age appropriate for the children that currently attend.

Overall, Ms. Jackie's family home childcare center provides a safe, inclusive, and stimulating environment that is vital for the success and happiness of young children. I am thankful not only for the opportunity to attend this visit, but also for her passion and love for children and learning.

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**North Carolina Budget's Impact
on Early Education**

The North Carolina House and Senate approved a long awaited \$21.74 billion budget which Governor McCrory signed into law on September 18, 2015. So how did early childhood education and family support programs fare in this budget? Below are some of the most significant outcomes relevant to Craven Smart Start.

Funding: Over \$620 million in state and federal funding for early education was continued for Smart Start, Child Care Subsidies and NC Pre-K, which also received a \$5 million boost to continue to support for 520 preschool slots approved last session. Smart Start's monetary match was increased from 15% in 2014-2015 to 17% for 2015-2016 and 19% in 2016-2017. (Note: This action places a greater burden on the 76 local Smart Start partnerships, which includes Craven Smart Start, to increase their fundraising efforts, while working hard to operate their programs and provide services.)

Child Care Subsidies: The budget redefines "family income unit" so that the income of relative caregivers, like grandparents, doesn't count against a child's eligibility. The budget also reestablishes a prorated parent fee for part-time child care.

Study Committee: Directs HHS Oversight to create an Early Education Sub-Committee that will study early childhood and family support programs, including the Child Care Subsidy Program, NC Pre-K, and Smart Start. The Sub-Committee must develop a proposal for a statewide plan to address how to meet the need of children by county or region by April 1, 2016.

DOD Licensing Exemption: Exempted Department of Defense (DOD) child care facilities from licensing and allowed these programs to participate in the state subsidized child care programs.

All in all, we, at Craven Smart Start, feel the budget shows strong support from policymakers for early education and we take this opportunity to thank them for their support and for their diligence in developing the state budget.

Source: NC Child Care Coalition & the North Carolina Partnership for Children

FY 2015-2016 Program Up-Date

On July 1, 2015, we began our 17th year of operation, as we entered a new fiscal year. Our partnership is made up of a very small administrative staff and Smart Start-funded community agencies whose programs provide education, health and family support services for young children. These organizations, known as Direct Service Providers (DSP's), play an integral role in meeting our mission. For Fiscal Year 2015-2016, our DSP programs include: Child Care Resource and Referral, a Child Care Health Consultant; Child Care Subsidy; Child Care WAGE\$; Community Outreach; Craven County Family Literacy Program, NC Pre-Kindergarten Program and Raising a Reader. On July 15th, DSP's met with Smart Start staff to plan and prepare for the new program year. For more information about our programs, visit: www.cravensmartstart.org



Grants Enhance Smart Start Services

In the last six months, Craven Smart Start has received the following grants:

"Promoting Acceptance of Diversity in Early Childhood Programs" – Funded by the **Harold H. Bate Foundation** - By receiving this grant, child care providers will receive training and materials focused on promoting the acceptance of diversity as well as technical assistance in implementing a self-assessment of the learning environment they provide for the children in their care. Intentional interactions and materials that promote the acceptance of diversity should be present in every learning environment for young children. By creating this environment of acceptance, children are encouraged to celebrate the similarities that bind us together rather than focusing on or differences. Diversity materials will also be available for check-out through the Resource Lending Library. This project was developed and is being implemented by the Quality Enhancement Coordinators, Letha Ricks and Liz Tuttle.

Grant Award Presentation – Don Brinkley and Joyce Hendricks (at left) with the Harold H. Bate Foundation, present the grant award to Craven Smart Start staff Pat Morrow, Liz Tuttle and Letha Ricks.



"Preventing Obesity and Promoting Wellness in Early Childhood Settings" – Funded by **Carolina East Foundation**. Initiated by our Child Care Health Consultant, Terri Walls RN, this program continues to enhance NAP SACC (Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care) program. The program was offered to all facilities that have participated in NAP SACC over the past 4 years. It will give early childhood educators the additional knowledge and practical strategies they need to provide more healthy nutrition and physical activity options for the children they serve. Upon completion of the six month program they will receive portable play equipment and family style dining serving sets.

"Making Music While Learning" – Funded by the Craven Community Foundation. Each week Child Care Resource and Referral staff will provide a Play and Learn Kindermusik session in the Trent Court Public Housing Auditorium. The sessions will be open to Trent Court and Craven Terrace Public Housing preschoolers and their parents. Sessions will utilize the research-based Kindermusik curriculum, which provides musical, literacy, social and hands-on activities for young children and their parents. Sessions will run for 36 weeks from September through May.

Many thanks to these foundations for their continued support. We are very grateful for their support and for their show of confidence in the work that we do. These grants promote creativity and innovation, making it possible for us to enhance our Smart Start services which are designed to build a foundation for learning in Craven County youngsters. For children to be successful in school and beyond they must get that foundation for learning.

Want to be a sponsor, runner or volunteer in our 3rd Annual Holiday Hustle to be held on December 12, 2015? Contact Pinkie Moore at 252-671-0689.

Craven Smart Start's 3rd Annual Holiday Hustle:

HUSTLE SPONSORS:

(as of September 30, 2015)

PRESENTING SPONSOR:

- Stubbs Perdue

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- Bear Contracting, LLC

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- Williams, Scarborough, Smith, Gray LLP CPA

MISTLETOE SPONSORS:

- BB&T
- Eastern Dermatology and Pathology, PA
- Huryn Psychological

TRIBUTE DONATIONS:

- New Bern Family Eye Care in honor of Kay Toler and Libby Register

RECENT DONATIONS:

- Pat and Vaughn Purnell
- Finance Office Staff of CarolinaEast Medical Center donation of toddler socks and underwear

**THANKS TO ALL
FOR YOUR SUPPORT!**