

CRAVEN SMART START NEWS

Craven Smart Start Newsletter

Spring, 2016

What Is Craven Smart Start?

One of 75 Smart Start partnerships across North Carolina, Craven Smart Start is a non-profit that was incorporated in 1998 and began providing services in 1999. Craven Smart Start, evolved from Smart Start, North Carolina's early childhood initiative. Below are some facts about Smart Start:

- Smart Start was created as a solution to a problem-children in North Carolina were coming to school unprepared to learn. In 1993, North Carolina policymakers determined they would need to enlist support of the private sector to establish an early childhood initiative as a public-private partnership. It was called Smart Start.
- Today, 75 Smart Start partnerships work in all 100 NC Counties, using public and private funds led by the North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc. Serving children, birth to five, Smart Start works across NC to raise the quality of child care, strengthen families, advance child health & development and improve early literacy.

This issue is designed to give a brief overview of the Smart Start program and to share information about Craven Smart Start's services.

Mission of Craven Smart Start: 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.



Children enjoy the book Good Night Moon during a Raising A Reader visit

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Conference attendees participate in a breakout session for administrators.

Advancing Child Health..

Smart Start strives to improve outcomes for children by working with medical providers, health departments, and families to improve the health and safety for young children and to prevent childhood obesity.

In Craven County, child care providers are incorporating healthier practices in their facilities after receiving technical assistance and training from Child Care Health Consultant Terri Walls, RN. Training also focused on Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care (NAP SACC) and Preventing Obesity and Promoting Wellness. Providers participating in these trainings received mobile play equipment that our partnership obtained through grants from the CarolinaEast Foundation.

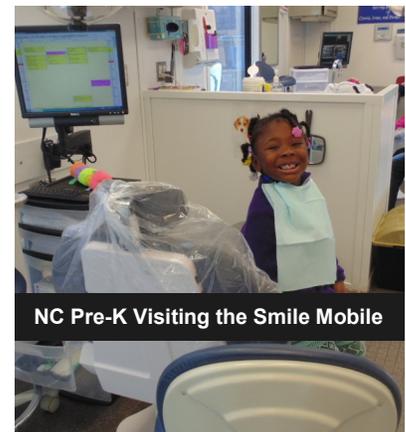
Raising the Quality of Child Care.....

Raising the quality of child care is a top priority of Smart Start. The goal is to promote high quality early care and education that is child-focused and family friendly. In addition, Smart Start child care subsidy funds have for years been used to increase the quality of early care and education in our state.

At Craven Smart Start, Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) plays a major role in raising the quality of child care. CCR&R staff, which includes Quality Enhancement Coordinators, make frequent technical assistance visits to child care facilities and offer many training sessions for early care educators throughout the year. CCR&R also hosts a yearly early childhood conference that offers participants a day of quality training and professional development. On March 12, 2016, 165 early care educators attended the 10th Annual Building Brighter Futures Conference, hosted by Craven Smart Start and CCR&R, on the New Bern campus of Craven Community College. Conference participants were positive and complimentary in their feedback about the conference and the presenters.

In addition to the trainings offered by our staff, Craven Smart Start also funds WAGE\$, a program that provides education-based salary supplements to low-paid workers, directors and family child care home providers. By rewarding teacher education and continuity of care, young children have more stable relationships with better educated teachers.

Craven Smart Start also partners with NC Pre-Kindergarten providers to help eligible 4 year olds access this high quality program by funding 80 slots in six NC Pre-K classrooms. North Carolina is one of only four states with a Pre-K program that meets all 10 National Institute Early Education Research benchmarks!



NC Pre-K Visiting the Smile Mobile

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Nadia Lowe provides books to families participating in a Raising A Reader event

Promoting Early Literacy....

Literacy affects our state's ability to develop a workforce that can compete in the global market. Recognizing that a majority of language development occurs in the first five years of life, Smart Start provides programs that develop early literacy skills needed to succeed in school, work and life.

One of these programs is Raising A Reader (RAR), the research-based family engagement and early literacy program, which Craven Smart Start funded this year. Raising A Reader rotates sturdy book bags filled with award-winning books to children's home weekly, exposing them to over 100 books a cycle. This literacy program helps families develop, practice, and maintain home-based literacy routines with their children from birth to five. In January, RAR Coordinator Nadia Lowe organized reading events for families at Little Blessings and Child Care Network # 77. Staff from the Havelock and New Bern Public Libraries were invited to attend to read to the children and to help parents obtain library cards.

Another early literacy program is Motherread. Family Literacy has a certified facilitator who uses this program at both sites in western Craven County to promote early literacy with their families.

Did you know ?

One in three children enter kindergarten lacking basic pre-reading skills.
Source: Jeff McQuillan, *The Literacy Crisis: False Claims, Real Solutions* ,

Why Craven Smart Start?

Ninety percent of critical brain development happens during early childhood and children's experiences during this period have a lasting impact on their later learning, health and success. Because today's children are tomorrow's leaders, parents, and workers, everyone has a stake in making sure that all children have the experiences they need to thrive.

Smart Start brings together all the people involved in a young child's life—families, teachers, doctors, caregivers, social workers, and many others to ensure that every North Carolina child has all they need for healthy growth and development.

Since 1998, Craven Smart Start, with help from partnering agencies, has been working diligently to build a foundation for Craven County's youngest citizens by expanding access to high quality early childhood education and by providing them essential health and family support, so they enter school healthy and ready to succeed.

Become an advocate for Craven Smart Start! Together, we can help Craven County children to get the best possible start in life.

Craven Smart Start is a 501(c)3. Donations are tax-deductible.

Contact Us

Give us a call for more information or questions about our services and programs.

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Visit us on the web at
www.cravensmartstart.org

Up-dates about Craven Smart Start with Photos on Page 5

- **Top Left: A Raising A Reader event for children & families at Little Blessings Child Care took place in January . Havelock Librarian Margie Garrison and Little Blessings Director Dawn Reddick are seen here with Pete the Cat.**
- **Top Right: CCR&R held a Play & Learn at Duffyfield Head Start for parents enrolled in their Home-based program. This session is funded by the Craven Community Foundation. Cali Broughton is seen here with a parent & her child.**
- **Center Left: Staff from The University of Mount Olive presented Pat Morrow, Executive Director, with a certificate recognizing Craven Smart Start as their "Business of the Month for January".**
- **Center Right: Parents and children really enjoy CCR&R's weekly Play and Learn session in our office. Here a parent helps her young child with a craft.**
- **Bottom Left: A Raising A Reader event for families took place at Child Care Network #77 in January. Nadia Lowe joins Center Director Tina Chase, New Bern Librarian Pam Jenkins and Booker the Bear.**
- **Bottom Right: Family Literacy held workshops for parents at the Vanceboro Farm Life & the J. W. Smith Elementary sites in March. Deborah Yarborough with the Craven County Health Department presented both sessions on "Healthy Homes". Door prizes were presented to parents by Pinkie Moore, Community Outreach Coordinator, The door prizes were first aid kits donated to Craven Smart Start by the Business Office of CarolinaEast.**

