



Ben D. Quinn Elementary NC Pre-K



J.T. Barber Elementary NC Pre-K



James W. Smith Elementary NC Pre-K



Graham A. Barber Elementary NC Pre-K



Vanceboro Farm Life Elementary NC Pre-K

During the week of May 18-May 21, staff from Craven Smart Start and CCR&R traveled throughout Craven County to visit the public school NC Pre-K sites pictured here. Each site was presented with a Certificate of Achievement and a \$500 Race to the Top grant award for increasing their star rating from a temporary license to a 5-star-rated child care license. Renee' Harrell, NC Pre-K Coordinator, and Lisa Kemp, ECP Preschool Coordinator, both from Craven County Schools, also participated in the award presentation. The grant award will be used for educational needs in the NC Pre-k classroom.

(See story on page 3)

### 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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By Pinkie Moore

It's budget time in "the Old North State" and NC legislators are busy crunching the numbers to finalize the state budget. Much has been said about budget issues relevant to K-12 education, but what about state investment in high quality early childhood programs which is a major focus of Smart Start and NC Pre-K and what do they have to do with K-12 education?

With the help of our friends at the NC Early Childhood Foundation (NCECF), we have compiled the Top 10 Things you should know about early childhood development... and its impact on 3rd grade outcomes and long-term success for children:

1. There are only 2000 days between the time a baby is born and when he or she will begin kindergarten. During that time brain architecture is forming, creating the foundation for all future learning
2. Child development is a dynamic, interactive process that is not predetermined. It occurs in the context of relationships, experiences and environments.
3. About 70 percent of the brain is developed by age one, and 90 Percent is developed by age three. It is during these years that genes interact with experience, providing a foundation—weak or strong—for all future learning, behavior and health.
4. The early years are important in shaping the long term health and success of our children and our communities. Studies demonstrate that children who have rich early learning experiences are better prepared to thrive in kindergarten and beyond.
5. Quality matters tremendously when it comes to early learning. Programs that are high quality have high staff qualifications, professional development for teachers and staff, low staff-child ratios and small class size, etc.
6. Well-qualified caregivers and educators are fundamental to high quality early learning programs. Parents have increased peace of mind and are more productive in the workforce knowing their child is safe and with stable and qualified teachers.
7. Only 35% of North Carolina fourth graders and 22 percent of students from economically disadvantaged families scored at or above reading proficiency (Economically disadvantaged is defined as children eligible for the National School Lunch Program.)
8. Reading in the early grades predicts high school success. Those who read well go on to graduate, but those who aren't reading well by the end of the third grade are four times more likely to drop out of high school.
9. Grade-level reading is achievable, according to Tracey Zimmerman, NCECF Executive Director. "Advances in brain science research and decades of longitudinal studies have identified what children need to be successful readers by third grade---good health, strong families, and high quality early learning experiences that build social-emotional and cognitive development."
10. High quality early learning is critical to sustaining our country's economic competitiveness. Every dollar invested in early childhood education produces a 7-10% annual return.

So...when we invest in a child's "first 2000 days", through programs like Smart Start and NC Pre-K, we create the best outcomes in education, health and economic well-being for everyone in North Carolina.

Sources: North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation www.first2000days.org & HOMEROOM/U.S. Department of Education www.ed.gov/blog/



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**Program Accomplishments in FY 2014-2015  
and a Need for Local Support**

June 30th marks the close of Fiscal Year 2014-2015. We are proud of the accomplishments of our partnership and of the positive impact that they have had on Craven County children, birth to five. Below are some notable outcomes and collaborations from our in-house programs and our service providers this year:

- The collaboration of the Craven County NC Pre-Kindergarten Program and Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) which resulted in 5 star-rated child care licenses for the NC Pre-K sites in public schools. (More on page 3 and 4)
- Craven County NC Pre-K program served 261 children... NC Pre-K classes reported little turn-over in participants and children made major growth in their assessments.
- Professional development among early childhood staff was booming... 182 early educators participated in CCR&R's early childhood conference and many participated in training from CCR&R/Smart Start staff and/or attended local colleges.
- The completion of the "lending library area" in the Barbara Avery Children's Room in the Cove City Library... a collaboration of the Cove City Public Library and CCR&R. (more on page 3)
- Staff turn-over in child care is 8%, thereby providing children in child care with much needed continuity in caregivers.... The Smart Started-funded WAGE\$ project has helped to reduce turn-over.
- Expansion of Play and Learn parent/child sessions for families in the eastern and western parts of the county... sessions were provided in a Craven County School in those areas each month through a grant from the Craven Community Foundation.
- Service provider, Parents as Teachers (PAT), served more families of varying ethnic backgrounds and cultures... 32 families in PAT were provided with the tools and skills necessary to enhance their young children's growth and development.

As a Smart Start partnership, we are required to meet a designated % of the funds we receive each year from the North Carolina General Assembly. We are very appreciative of the support that we have received: the donations from board members and supporters; the in-kind contributions from businesses and community partners; the hours of service from volunteers and the grants awarded by area foundations. Despite these contributions and the funds raised from our fundraisers, we still find it challenging to raise the needed private dollars. Therefore, we ask parents and consumers of our programs, child care providers, and others who recognize the importance of investing in our work on behalf of children during their first 2000 days of life to become champions for children and supporters of Craven Smart Start. Your donation and support would be greatly appreciated and would make a difference in the lives of young children in Craven County.

**Applebee's Flapjack Breakfast Fundraiser**



*Don Brinkley & Dr. Sandra Potter, Craven Smart Start Board Members join Letha Ricks, CCR&R Staff Member in preparing for our Applebee's Flapjack Fundraiser.*

Our first ever Flapjack fundraiser was held on April 25th at the Applebee's restaurant in New Bern. It was a great success and lots of fun. Thanks to Board members and staff who supported this fundraiser by selling tickets and working at the event. Thanks, also to those individuals who joined us for breakfast. A very special thank you to Applebee's Restaurant Manager Jeanette Brown and her staff for their assistance. Proceeds from the event will be used to provide books to young children in Craven County.

**NC Pre-K & CCR&R: Collaborating for 5 Stars**

Since 2001, North Carolina has provided full day, public prekindergarten, now known as NC Pre-K, to 255,000 children statewide. The program is designed to provide high quality educational experiences to enhance school readiness for eligible four year old children. In Craven County, the program is administered by Craven County Schools with support from a variety of sources, including Craven Smart Start. Classrooms are operated in state-licensed child care and Head Start centers and public schools

NC Pre-K classrooms have always met high quality programmatic and staffing standards and, if located in a child care/Head Start facility, been required to maintain a 4 or 5 star-rated child care license. Although public school NC Pre-K sites have been required to meet the same high quality standards for programs and staff, they have been exempt from state child care licensure—until this year. Pursuing a North Carolina child care license, with its many rules and regulations, is challenging, but pursuing child care licensing in elementary school buildings, and for five schools all at the same time, seemed a daunting task for Craven NC Pre-K.

But there was help available and it was as close as the Craven Smart Start office, where the Child Care Resource and Referral program is housed. In discussions with CCR&R staff, Renee' Harrell and Lisa Kemp, who oversee the public school NC pre-K sites, found a community partner who is very knowledgeable of child care regulations and very willing to guide them in their quest to be licensed. Together the two agencies developed a training and technical assistance plan with the goal for each public school site to obtain a 4 or 5 star-rated license. CCR&R Quality Enhancement Coordinators, Letha Ricks and Elizabeth Tuttle, along with Child Care Health Consultant Terri Walls, RN, worked with NC Pre-K staff to implement this ambitious plan.

After many hours of technical assistance and training for NC Pre-K staff and some school principals over the past year, all five schools were prepared for reviews with NC Child Care Licensing consultants and evaluators. The outcome: each school received a 5 star-rated license...and by achieving a 5 star license and participating in CCR&R's technical assistance plan, each school was eligible to receive a \$500 Race to the Top grant award for use in their classroom! Congratulations to all for a job well done.



**COMING  
December 12, 2015...**

**Craven Smart Start's 3rd  
Annual Holiday  
Hustle: 5K, 10K & Family Fun Run  
Presenting Sponsor  
Stubbs Perdue  
Want to be a sponsor or run in this  
race event? Contact Karen Wood  
(252) 636-3198 Ext 25**

**TRIBUTE DONATIONS:**

- **Alison Mattocks in honor of Rosa McKnight**
- **Pinkie Moore in memory of Sheila Marie Reddick**

**RECENT DONATIONS:**

- **Michele Garcia, AllState of Havelock**
- **Alpha Delta Kappa Sorority, Inc.**
- **Kim Matthews**
- **Bernard White, NB Alderman**

**THANK YOU  
FOR YOUR SUPPORT!**

**Lending Library  
Opens in Cove City**

*(from left to right): Jewel Smith and Nancy Chase, Cove City Library staff; Mike McCoy, Craven Smart Start Board Member; Jennifer Bolz and Rachel Ward, Craven Smart Start/CCR&R staff hold the plaque that is being placed in the Lending Library area of the Barbara Avery Children's Room in the Cove City Library.*

For the past year our partnership has been working with the Cove City Library to establish an area in the Barbara Avery Children's Room for educational toys and learning materials that can be checked out and used at home. This wonderful collaboration is provided by Craven Smart Start through a grant from the Harold H. Bate Foundation and implemented by Child Care Resource and Referral. On May 19th the Cove City Public Library and Craven Smart Start hosted a grand opening of the "lending library area". Craven County Commissioner Jason Jones, Craven Smart Start Board Member Mike McCoy, and local families joined staff from the library and Craven Smart Start to celebrate the opening. Many thanks to the Bate Foundation and the Cove City Library for their support of this literacy project. Special thanks to Jennifer Bolz for all of her efforts in overseeing this project for CCR&R.