

CRAVEN SMART START NEWS

Craven Smart Start Newsletter

Winter Issue 2018

Be A Literacy Champion for Children

Did you know that 60% of kindergarteners who did poorly in school did not own a single book? The years from birth to age 5 are a critical time for children's development and learning. The development of early skills appears to be particularly important in the area of literacy. Created in 1998, Craven Smart Start works with partnering agencies, to provide services that focus on early learning and literacy, health and family support, all with the objective of preparing children for success in kindergarten.

Expanding early literacy has long been a major focus area of Craven Smart Start, as evidenced by our long-time resource lending library, the programs we fund, like Raising A Reader, and our collaborative relationships with local libraries and literacy organizations. Coming soon, Craven Smart Start will further expand early literacy in our county with the launch of the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, an early literacy initiative that mails age-appropriate books to registered children, from birth to their 5th birthday, on a monthly basis.

Our funding for this initiative, from the North Carolina General Assembly, will enable us to serve 390 children, which is 5% of Craven County's birth to five population. Craven Smart Start is excited about implementing this initiative for Craven County families but want to serve many more Craven youngsters, especially those with no books. To do so, we will need the community's financial help. Businesses, civic groups, individuals.. be a Literacy Champion for Children. **A donation of \$25 will provide one local child a book each month for a whole year.** For more information, contact Pat Morrow, Craven Smart Start Executive Director at 636-3198.

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.



One of the NC Pre-K classes at Excel VII enjoying a Raising A Reader (RAR) session with Ms. Nadia. Craven Smart Start is proud to provide support both NC Pre-K and RAR.

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Four-year olds who attend the NC Pre-K class at Child Care Network #77 in New Bern buckle up for their first field trip to visit the Fossil Museum in Aurora in September.

Educational Inequality by Age Three!

According to a new book [Cradle to Kindergarten](#), educational inequality in the United States is apparent by age three. Authors of the book say that most rich kids are in school, while most poor kids are not. Only 55% of America's 3 and 4 year-olds attend a formal preschool or child care, a rate far below China, Germany and many other developed countries.

"Many working parents, who can't afford pre-school or regulated child care, which averages \$10,000 a year, typically leave their kids with a grandparent or someone near by. Some of these informal child care providers offer rigorous educational activities but others just leave kids in front of the TV. The quality is more haphazard and there's a higher risk the option won't work out."

And that's not the only consequence. The authors report that the inequality that begins before kindergarten lasts a lifetime. "Children who don't get formal schooling until kindergarten tend to start off a year behind in math and verbal skills and they never catch up. The earliest years are the most promising for brain and skill development, yet it is when the U.S. invests the least."

The educational inequality described in this book supports the importance of North Carolina's Subsidized Child Care Assistance Program (SCCA) and the North Carolina Pre-Kindergarten Program. Craven Smart Start is proud to provide funding to help support both of these programs. The SCCA program provides assistance to eligible families in paying for quality child care. Families must meet income and need criteria. Categories of need are to support employment, education, developmental needs, Child Protective Services and Child Welfare Services. Income eligibility is met by falling under the 200% federal poverty level for children birth to 5 and 133% for children 6 to 12. The NC Pre-K program is designed to provide high quality educational experiences to enhance school readiness for eligible four-year olds. Unfortunately both programs have funding limitations and frequently have waiting lists, but these programs do help a significant number of Craven families and children and for that we are grateful. The US must do more, otherwise "left-behind" kids will grow up to be further behind in lower-paying jobs with fewer opportunities and the US will lose out on their unused potential.

Jennifer East Hired for CCHC Position

Craven Smart Start is pleased to announce that Jennifer East, BSN, RN, was hired to fill the Child Care Health Consultant (CCHC) position for our partnership in October.

Jennifer has worked with the Craven County Schools Health Services Program for the past 13 years as a School Nurse and School Nurse Coordinator. Her nursing experience spans 18 years, and includes Duke University Medical Center Intensive Care Nursery, UNC Rex Hospital Labor and Delivery, Craven County Health Department Maternity Clinic, CEMC Childbirth Educator and Supplemental Nursing Pool.

Jennifer is a registered nurse who holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing from UNC Chapel Hill and a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Sociology from UNC Wilmington.

As a CCHC, Jennifer promotes safe and healthy environments in child care by providing trainings and consultations.



Meet Jennifer East,, BSN, RN, our new Child Care Health Consultant.

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Bianca Chacon, Referral Specialist for Child Care Resource and Referral, can assist families who are looking for quality child care or have child care-related questions.

Looking for Quality Child Care?

Parents who are looking for quality child care or who have questions related to child care issues, are encouraged to contact Referral Specialist, Bianca Chacon at Child Care Resource and Referral. CCR&R provides free child care referral services for parents who are looking for quality care or have questions about what to look for in choosing quality care. Bianca is familiar with the various types of regulated care and keeps track of the child care openings in the six county regions of Craven, Pamlico, Beaufort, Hyde, Tyrell and Washington counties. She can provide families with information necessary to make informed decisions at the CCR&R office or by phone. Parents can also request child care referrals on-line by clicking on the Child Care Search button on www.cravensmartstart.org. For more information, contact her at Bianca@cravensmartstart.org or call (252) 672-5921. The Craven Smart Start/Child Care Resource and Referral office is located in Magnolia Plaza at 2111F Neuse Boulevard in New Bern. Office hours are 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM Monday through Friday.

Did you knowthat the vocabulary of children's books is three times richer than parent-child conversation?

Our Holiday Hustle...Another Success!

Despite cold rainy weather conditions, our 5th Annual Holiday Hustle race fundraiser held on December 9th proved to be another success—as 110 runners braved the cold to take part in the races. Congratulations to the winners and thanks to all who participated—you are all winners to us!

We also would like to express our thanks to everyone who supported and/o assisted with the Holiday Hustle, which includes our Emcee Matt Callihan from News Channel 12; members of the New Bern Police Department, our volunteers; Craven Smart Start Board Members; Craven Smart Start staff and their family members.

A Big Thank You to all of our Holiday Hustle sponsors and donors. We especially want to thank our Title Sponsors B/S/H/; Bojangles; BOB 93.3 and our Spirit Sponsors: Child Care Network; Cowey Insurance; Group; DoubleTree by Hilton; Fisher Stores; Potash Corp. Aurora; Stubbs Perdue and Bender Apparel.& Signs..

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: Congratulations to the Child Care Network team for winning the Holiday Hustle team competition for child care centers. Team members, with Emcee Matt Callihan, proudly hold the traveling trophy that will be in the center for the next year.
- Top Right: Craven Smart Start staff enjoyed meeting parents and children in costumes at the New Bern Recreation and Parks Department Parade of Preschoolers in October.
- Center Left: Congratulations to the Zoo Crew running team from Bender Apparel and Sound Fitness for winning the business team competition. Team member Berry Bender is seen here receiving the traveling trophy from Emcee Matt Callihan.
- Center Right: Nadia Lowe, Coordinator for our Raising A Reader (RAR) program, created a red bag costume that looks just like the RAR bag that children in the program carry home full of books to read with their parents. Nadia finds this a good way to build the children's excitement about books, as she visits the eight child care center classes that participate in RAR in Craven County. Nadia was recognized for her creativity in an Affiliate Spotlight on the RAR website in December!
- Bottom Left: Children accompanied by parents and grandparents enjoyed holiday storytelling and music and movement activities with Mrs. Claus (aka Letha Ricks) at our Resource Lending Library in December.
- Bottom Right: Children & teachers in this NC Pre-K class at Excel VII enjoy a visit with Ms. Nadia.

