

CRAVEN SMART START NEWS

Craven Smart Start Newsletter

Summer Issue 2019

A Child Care Crisis in North Carolina

Child care has always been at the core of the Smart Start initiative with its emphasis on high quality early childhood education with the goal to make child care resources “accessible and affordable for all”. Smart Start partnerships have worked diligently with child care facilities to raise the quality of child care, as evidenced by the higher star rating in facilities across the state. Yet, there are still lots of issues related to child care in North Carolina. According to Ready Nation, North Carolina’s working parents know how difficult it is to find child care that is accessible, affordable and high quality. Nearly 1/3 of American parents report having difficulty finding this type of child care. “The problem is particularly acute for parents of very young children, as infant-toddler care is typically the least available and the most expensive. Further children under three are experiencing the most crucial period of brain development. North Carolina employers also know the economic impact of these child care challenges, that will worsen as the child care crisis continues.”

The majority of American parents with very young children are now in the workforce and need child care so they can work to support their families. While at work, they need to know that child care provides a safe, nurturing environment for their child’s development and early learning. National data indicate that child care availability is especially limited for families with infants and toddlers or who work at night or live in rural areas. North Carolina, like other states, has a problem with “infant toddler child care deserts” with more than five children under age three for each licensed child care slot. Continued on Page 4

Mission of Craven Smart Start:

Building Brighter Futures for Young Children



This class of two year olds at F.R. Danyus Head Start enjoy pizza, as they celebrate their year of participating in Raising A Reader. They each received a RAR Blue Bag full of books.

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Congratulations to Family Literacy adult students from the Vanceboro site and Adult Educator Regina Edmonds for organizing the Dream Night Celebration held in May .

Program Spotlight

Child Care WAGE\$(R) Program

The Child Care WAGE\$® Program provides education-based salary supplements to Craven County teachers and family child care home providers working in sites with at least three stars. As a result of this increased compensation, participants are encouraged to stay in their child care programs and to pursue additional education. Equally important, they experience less financial stress, which improves teacher well-being and gives them a greater opportunity to focus on the children in their classrooms.

Thanks to funding from Craven Smart Start, Inc., WAGE\$ has paid 72 early educators so far this year; these folks work in 35 different child programs, serving 1,276 children. These participants consistently express their gratitude to Craven Smart Start for supporting these supplements. One teacher said, “Thank you. The supplements have given my family much needed income and it has allowed me to stay in my job that I love.” A center director shared, “WAGE\$ gives teachers incentive to go back and finish their education as well as better interaction with children due to less stress.” **Thank you, Craven Smart Start!**

Submitted by Allison Miller, VP Compensation Initiatives Child Cart Services Association

Craven Smart Start is very proud to support the Child Care WAGE\$ education-based salary supplements for our Craven County child care teachers and family child care home providers. The salary supplements are for low paid child care workers based on their education level and length of employment at the child care facility. The Child Care WAGE\$® Program is administered by the Child Care Services Association, a non-profit agency in Chapel Hill.

NC Pre-K Registration Scheduled for July 29th

The NC Pre-Kindergarten Program is designed to provide high-quality educational experiences to enhance school readiness for eligible four-year-old children. For the 2019-2020 school year, children must be four year olds on or before August 31, 2019, to qualify.

NC Pre-K slots are limited in Craven County and parents, who would like their four year old to attend a Pre-K class, must register. Craven County Schools and Coastal Community Action will be holding Late Registration for NC Pre-K and Head Start on Monday, July 29, 2019 from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm at J. T. Barber Elementary School at 1700 Cobb Street in New Bern. Parents must bring an official birth certificate and proof of family income. It is not necessary for the child to attend. Participants will be selected based on program criteria, which includes family income. There is no cost for families selected to participate. For information, call (252) 244-3225.



Ms. Wanda greeted parents as they arrived to register for NC Pre-K or Head Start in Havelock in June.

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Pinkie Moore –Community
Outreach Coordinator /Newsletter



Sandra Arasim, Regional Infant Toddler Specialist with Craven Smart Start , was the guest speaker at the Craven Early Learning Network meeting in May.

Community Outreach

Community Outreach is a Smart Start-funded activity that works to educate the community about Craven Smart Start services and to connect families to the services. In addition, Community Outreach works to forge alliances in the community and to build networks that focus on young children and their families.

Besides representing Craven Smart Start at outreach events and community meetings, the Community Outreach Coordinator has created a collaborative that focuses on “the early learners”, children from birth to five. Created in November, 2016, the Craven Early Learning Network is made up of a number of community organizations that work with families with young children or who work with adults who have young children in the home. This group has evolved into a cohesive collaborative with a common objective to learn more about early childhood issues and about local resources that benefit young children and their families. The meetings have generally featured speakers from community resources or civic clubs, although in January, 2019, the group had a field trip to a new sensory gym (No Boundaries) in New Bern, while it was under construction!

In FY 2019-2020, Community Outreach will work to increase parent involvement in the Craven Early Learning Network and to survey parents to see what they have to say about their needs and interests, as it relates to their young children. Parents or organizations that are interested in learning more about the efforts of Community Outreach are encouraged to contact Pinkie Moore, Community Outreach Coordinator at pmoore@cravensmartstart.org.

Continued from page 1. **A Child Care Crisis in North Carolina**

Infant care in a North Carolina child care center averages \$9,254 per year. The high cost makes child care unaffordable for many families, especially lower income families and currently 29,000 North Carolina children are on the wait list for child care subsidies.

The business leaders of Ready Nation North Carolina are calling on lawmakers to protect and expand programs that enhance the affordability and availability of quality child care—and to foster continuing innovations at the state and local level that address this problem for parents and employers. In particular, policy makers must expand the child care subsidy, create incentives to expand the supply of quality infant toddler programs and strengthen the education and compensation of early childhood teachers

The stakes are enormously high for the many North Carolina families, who depend on parents' employment, as well as for children, who depend on nurturing, stimulating environments for healthy brain development during the first three years of life. **Action and innovation now** will improve life outcomes for North Carolina children today and strengthen the North Carolina workforce and economy both now and in the years to come.

Source: "Want to Grow North Carolina's Economy? Fix the Child Care Crisis", A Report from Ready Nation: Council for A Strong America

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

Photos on Top Left: and Right and Photos in Center

- Top Left: . Four-year-olds in this Smart Start-funded NC Pre-K class at Child Care Network # 77 read books with parents at a Raising A Reader parent workshop in April.
- Top Right: Nadia Lowe, Raising A Reader Coordinator for Craven Smart Start, gives each child who attends Paula's Family Child Care Home in Havelock with their own RAR Blue Bag for participating in Raising A Reader this year.
- Center Left. & Right The program, Reach Out and Read, is being implemented in the Craven County Community Health Centers in New Bern and Havelock from funding acquired by Craven Smart Start in 2018. Pictured here are bookcases, children's tables and chairs, and children's books provided through the grant.
- Bottom Left. Congratulations to Kent Flowers, Director of the County Department of Social Services, who retired on June 1st with 36 years of service. Kent, a Craven Smart Start Board member for 21 years, was presented with a crystal keepsake denoting his Board service at the May Board meeting—here with Board President, Dr. Sandra Potter and Pat Morrow, Craven Smart Start Executive Director.
- Bottom Right. Pam Jenkins, with the New Bern Library; Shelley Collins with New Bern Parks and Recreation and Vickie Sherman with Focus Therapy were guest speakers at the June 12th meeting of the Craven Early Learning Network.

