

CRAVEN SMART START NEWS

Craven Smart Start Newsletter

Fourth Issue FY 2019-2020

Looking Ahead at Leandro v. North Carolina

Difficult and challenging times continue throughout our state and nation, yet our staff stay optimistic and “mission-minded”. As we focus on our strategic plan for the new fiscal year, we keep seeing a familiar name that may have a big impact on early childhood in North Carolina in years to come. Do you recognize the name Leandro, which is associated with the long-running court case, Leandro v. North Carolina?

Leandro v. North Carolina is a lawsuit filed in 1994 by five low-wealth school districts who claimed that they did not have enough money to provide an equal education for their students. In 1997, the North Carolina Supreme Court ruled that the state’s students have a constitutional right to a “sound, basic education.” The court subsequently ruled that to meet its constitutional duty, the state must, among other things— identify the resources necessary, including access to early education, to ensure that all children, including those at-risk, have an equal opportunity to obtain a sound, basic education. In 2017, the parties agreed to work for a resolution. The court hired WestEd and Gov. Cooper created a Commission. In 2019, WestEd and the Commission released their recommendations, with WestEd recommending \$1.1 billion in new investment for early childhood over eight years. In June, 2020, the parties filed their first action plan, outlining actions for FY 20-21. Stay tuned, as we learn how North Carolina plans to meet its obligation to provide a sound, basic education.

In this issue, we share some success stories from our service providers and update readers on our special Child Care Provider Appreciation Day visits to providers throughout the county. We hope you enjoy. Stay safe!

Mission of Craven Smart Start:

Building Brighter Futures for Young Children



Pat Morrow , Craven Smart Start E.D, and NBPD Chief Summers visit Kiddie Kollege and owner Becky Muse during the Child Care Provider Appreciation Tour to facilities in May.

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Our Child Care Provider Appreciation tour kicked –off at Excel 7 in New Bern where our staff (in masks) surprised Excel 7 directors with a yard sign and masks for staff.

Child Care Provider Appreciation Day !!

National Child Care Appreciation Day is a special day set aside each year to recognize child care providers, teachers and other educators of young children throughout the United States. Observed on the first Friday in May, Child Care Provider Appreciation Day, this year, fell on May 8th. With 43 state licensed child care facilities providing care to children of essential and front-line workers, it seemed to be the perfect time to let our child care providers know how much we appreciate them for all they do to nurture, teach and care for our young children.

To recognize and express our appreciation to child care providers in Craven County, we scheduled a tour throughout the county with two teams of Craven Smart Start staff driving and briefly visiting every child care facility to personally thank them for their service. In New Bern, we were accompanied by Toussaint Summers, Chief of the New Bern Police Department and Craven Smart Start Board Member. Our staff presented each facility with a certificate of appreciation, face masks for child care workers and a colorful yard sign that said, “Heroes Work Here...Thank you Childcare Workers”. The yard signs evoked emotional reactions and tears from some providers, as well as from our staff. We all agreed it was a real honor to make a personal visit to say thank you to these providers.

North Carolina’s child care industry has always been important to supporting families, our economy and nurturing and building brains of our future leaders. This year, it is especially important to let the child care providers know how much they are appreciated, as this workforce is absolutely critical to ensuring that our essential and front-line workers have safe, quality care for their children. During the current COVID-19 crisis, providers are working extra hard following new guidelines for sanitation and social distancing, while facing the increased risk of exposure.

Editor’s Note: We would like to take this opportunity to thank the volunteers who made and/or donated the face masks that we gave to child care providers. These volunteers included Cookie Davenport and the Carolina Colours “Maskateers” and the volunteers affiliated the Craven County Disaster Recovery Alliance and Neuse Forest Presbyterian Church.

NC Pre-Kindergarten Registration Is Online

The Craven County School District is holding on-line registration for the NC Pre-Kindergarten Program for children who will be four-years of age by August 31, 2020. All applicants must meet the state’s eligibility requirements.

Parents interested in applying for this high quality educational pre-k program should visit the Craven County Schools website at <https://www.cravenk12.org/Domain/251> and click on the link to begin the pre-kindergarten application process. Parents will need to submit a copy of the child’s official birth certificate and proof of family income, which can be two consecutive pay stubs, tax documents or other documents that support a family’s income.

For additional information about the NC Pre-Kindergarten Program or for help in completing the application process, contact Renee’ Harrell at 252-244-3225.



NC Pre-K registration is currently underway on-line this year.

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Jessica Baker, an adult student from the Craven County Family Literacy Program, received her HSE Diploma and a DAR Scholarship Award during an end-of-year graduation parade.

Family Literacy Student Earns HSE Diploma

Congratulations to Jessica Amber Baker, an adult student of the Craven County Family Literacy Program, who earned her 2020 High School Equivalency Diploma this spring. Jessica and her young daughter Cadence enrolled in the Family Literacy program in Vanceboro in February, 2019. She began working on her G.E.D., while little Cadence attended the early childhood program on the Family Literacy campus with her. According to Adult Educator Regina Edmonds, “Jessica has served as a leader and a helper among her classroom peers. She enjoys trying new things and learning unfamiliar concepts. Jessica is interested in becoming a registered nurse and is now enrolled at Craven Community College where she will continue her studies in the field of health care. Graduation is just the first step to a promising future for Jessica”.

To celebrate Jessica’s achievement, staff of the Vanceboro Family Literacy site organized a surprise end-of-year graduation parade made up of decorated cars, blowing their horns and playing music, while driving through Jessica’s neighborhood on June 9th. During the celebration, Jessica was presented with her High School Equivalency Diploma and with a Scholarship Award from the Richard Dobbs Spaight Chapter of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution. In receiving the scholarship, Jessica was recognized for “her diligence and leadership throughout her enrollment in the adult program of the Craven County Family Literacy Program”.

A Message from the Child Care WAGE\$ Program

The Child Care WAGE\$ Program provides education-based salary supplements to early educators in Craven County with funding support from Craven Smart Start and the Division of Child Development and Early Education. Now, during the COVID-19 crisis, early educators need this compensation more than ever. The Child Care WAGE\$ Program was challenged to determine the best ways to assist participants during this crisis and implement appropriate procedures and policies. With funder support and guidance, WAGE\$ held harmless due to COVID-19 impact from March to June. As a result, participants received their supplements when they needed them most.

Before, during and after the pandemic, teachers have a critical role to play. Not only are they the workforce behind the workforce, allowing parents to work and the economy to grow, but their education and ability are critical to children's development. The WAGE\$ recipients have shared how the supplements impact those goals. For example, one Craven teacher said, "WAGE\$ has helped me to stay and teach in an early childhood program. Without it, I would have to work elsewhere. Another important part of WAGE\$, I attained my Bachelor's Degree!"

Participants are also grateful to Smart Start. Another shared, "Smart Start is part of my heartbeat. They're always there. They are always willing to help whether I call them or they call me. The reach is very much within. WAGE\$ and Smart Start are an avenue that every person should travel for a better tomorrow."
Submitted by Allison Miller, Child Care Services Association

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.

Craven Smart Start, Inc.
2111F Neuse Boulevard
New Bern, NC 28560

(252) 636-3198 (Ext 29)

pmoore@cravensmartstart.org

Visit us on the web at
www.cravensmartstart.org

Photos on Page 5 of our Child Care Provider Appreciation visits to child care providers throughout Craven County.

To see more photos, visit our Face Book page.

- Top Left: Our Children Child Care — child care center in Vanceboro
- Top Right: For the Love of Children — family child care home in James City community
- Center Left: Child Care Network # 74 —child care center in Havelock
- Center Right: Little Hands Day Nursery —child care center in New Bern
- Bottom Left: Precious Moments Family Child Care Home --family child care home in New Bern
- Bottom Right: Fresh Start —family child care home in New Bern

