



News Release

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GET ON THE BUS! EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION BUS TOUR

RALEIGH, NC – What prepares children today for their opportunities tomorrow? Wake County SmartStart will host an Early Childhood Education Bus Tour to raise awareness regarding what is high quality early childhood education, and how it prepares children for success in school and in life. At the first stop, attendees will visit an **NC Pre-Kindergarten** program site, where groups will observe a classroom and hear from experts how elements of the program enhance learning. Why is quality early childhood education so important? It builds a strong brain architecture, which all future learning is built upon, it impacts the skills gap: By 3rd grade, about 1/3 of the achievement gap can be closed by early education and it creates a path towards a stronger economy: Participants in high quality early childhood programs have higher earnings, pay more taxes and are less likely to rely on government assistance.

On the second stop of the tour, attendees will deliver books to preschool aged children at a child care center as part of the community-wide **Wake Up and Read** book drive effort. Tour participants will get an overview of literacy needs in the community and hear how agencies are partnering with the greater community to address the need. Over 350 books will be left at the center for their own family engagement event, where children and their families will select ten books to build their very own at home "libraries".

**WHERE: Tour kicks off at Wake County SmartStart Office Parking Lot
4901 Waters Edge Drive, Raleigh, NC 27606**

WHEN: Tuesday, May 13th, 8:30-11:00 A.M.

**STOP 1: Child Care Networks 60
2912 Brentwood Road, Raleigh, 27604**

Visit an NC Pre-Kindergarten classroom and learn about characteristics of high quality early childhood education.

**STOP 2: Irregular Time Child Enrichment Center
4030-100 Capital Boulevard, Raleigh, 27604**

Deliver over 350 books that were collected as part of the community Wake Up and Read book drive.

About Wake County SmartStart

Wake County SmartStart works to ensure children, birth to five, are prepared for success in school and in life. This mission is carried out in three goal areas; accessible and available high quality child care, safe and healthy living environments and kindergarten readiness. Through community collaborations and funding of local partners, we expand the support available to children and their families. By working together, we are strengthening the outcomes for not only our children, but our entire community. To learn more about our mission, visit www.wakesmartstart.org.

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