



# News Release

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## Wake County SmartStart, Local Recipient of Federal Funds to Ensure Children Start Kindergarten Healthy

Wake County SmartStart (WCSS) has been awarded over \$400,000 over four years to increase the number of children starting Kindergarten at a healthy weight. WCSS has been selected as a sub-grantee of a grant from the Social Innovation Fund (SIF), a federal program of the Corporation for National Community Service (CNCS) - and will receive \$100,612 annually and will implement this project in collaboration with community partners such as the Wake County Cooperative Extension, Advocates for Health in Action, and the Wake County Farm to Child Care Initiative.

**A commitment of federal funding reinforces and strengthens the case for just how critical early experiences can be – for children, our community, our state, and the future.** As a leader in the community in advancing high quality early learning experiences, WCSS is excited to have the opportunity to reach more children and improve their nutritional and physical wellbeing.

Pam Dowdy, Executive Director of Wake County SmartStart, said “the heart of our work is in ensuring that children are ready to learn in Kindergarten and prepared for success throughout life. Exposing a child to healthy habits early - including physical activity and good nutrition - can inspire a lifetime of healthy behavior. **We are grateful to have a community of early childhood professionals who eagerly embrace this approach, and, with this grant, have the opportunity to better serve children and families.**”

The North Carolina Partnership for Children (NCPC) / SmartStart was originally awarded a \$4 million grant to mobilize public and private support for Shape NC: Healthy Starts for Young Children Initiative. At the county level, The John Rex Endowment will provide the local match requirement as part of their ongoing partnership to promote a healthy weight among Wake County children.

If you are interested in interviewing WCSS Executive Director Pam Dowdy or a child care provider, regarding how this investment will impact early learning in Wake County, please contact Jessie Drescher, Communications Coordinator, at (919) 723-9282 or email at [jdrescher@wakesmartstart.org](mailto:jdrescher@wakesmartstart.org).

### 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 four goal areas; children are in safe supportive home environments, are in high-quality care that contributes to positive child outcomes, are healthy and ready for school and that children and their families are supported by a strong, diverse integrated early childhood system. Through community collaborations and funding of local partners, we expand the support available to children and their families. To learn more about our mission, visit [www.wakesmartstart.org](http://www.wakesmartstart.org).

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