



The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc.

**Joint Appropriations on  
Health and Human Services Committee**

**April 3, 2013**

Nancy H. Brown, Ph.D., Board Chair

Stephanie Fanjul, President

The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc.

# Smart Start

**The North Carolina of tomorrow depends on the children of today.**

**Smart Start is:**

- All children,
- All 100 counties—mountains, piedmont and coast,
- Innovation and problem-solving, and
- The best of North Carolina.



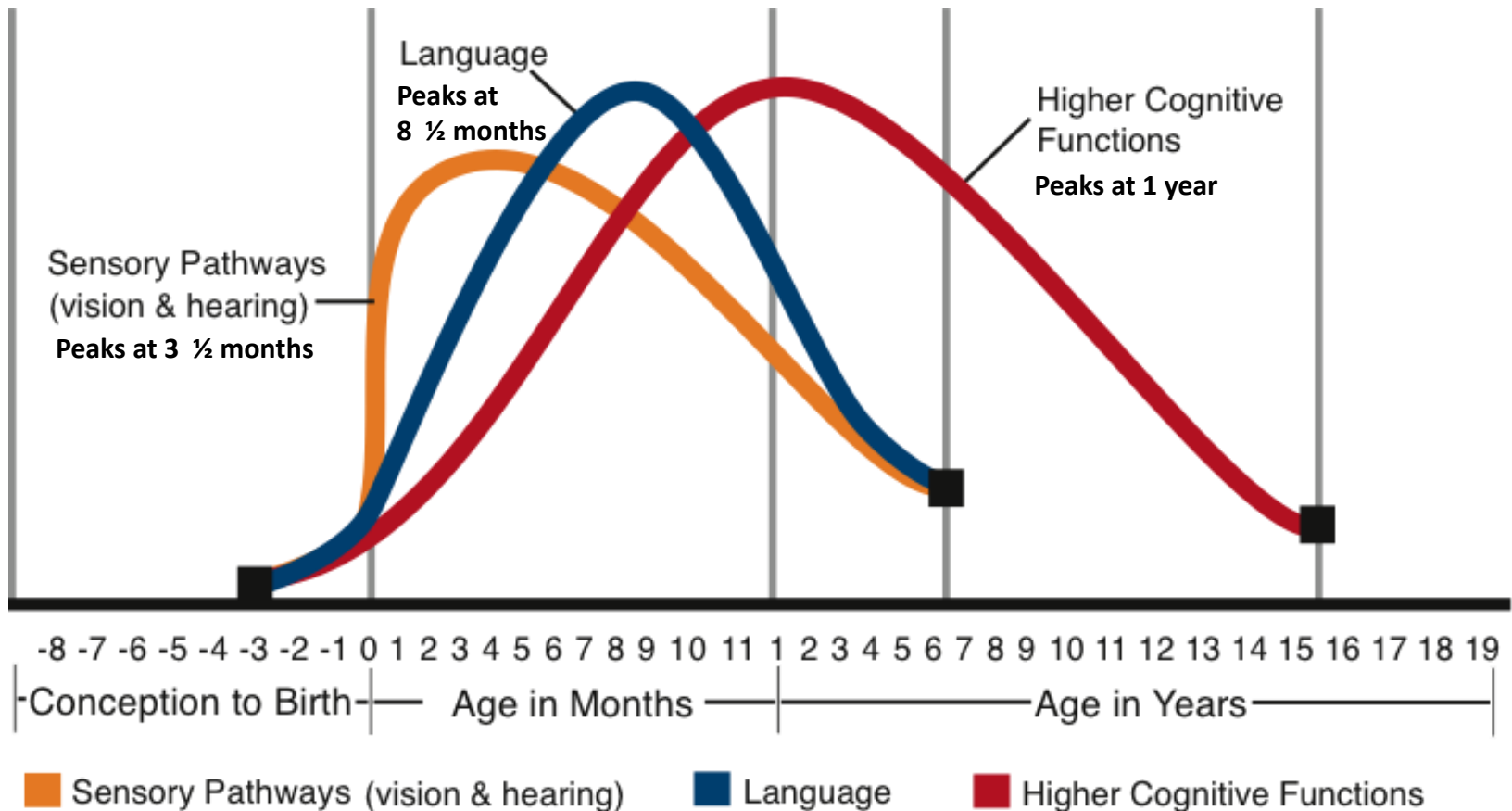
# Why Birth to Five?



# Early Experiences Have Lasting Impact

- There are only 2,000 days from the time a baby is born to when that child begins kindergarten. 90% of critical brain development occurs during that time.
- The wiring that forms the brain's architecture happens in infancy and early childhood. And how that wiring is formed, either as a strong or weak foundation, depends on a child's earliest experiences.

# It's All About the Brain



Graph Source: C.A. Nelson (2000)

# Early Experiences Build Future Success

Early experiences lay the groundwork for future health and form the foundation of the skills needed for academic and workplace success. For a strong foundation, children need:

- Strong families,
- Environments that support healthy outcomes, and
- High-quality early care and education programs that are safe and provide opportunities for learning.

Building a brain right from the beginning is easier and more effective than trying to fix it later.

# Early Care and Education

Approximately 80% of children birth to five participate in some type of early care and education arrangement prior to entering kindergarten, of which greater than 60% are in regulated child care settings.

# Accountable, Efficient, Produces Outcomes

**Smart Start is North Carolina's  
investment in children birth to five.**



The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc.



# Accountable

Smart Start is North Carolina's public/private partnership that creates innovative solutions to measurably increase the learning and healthy development of children birth to five.

- Led by The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc. (NCPC).
- 76 community-based Local Partnerships serve all 100 counties.
- NCPC establishes measurable statewide outcomes. Communities determine best approach to achieving them.

# Accountable

NCPC ensures that Smart Start Local Partnerships fully meet all legislatively mandated requirements and operate to the highest standards of effectiveness, accountability, efficiency and integrity.

NCPC conducts rigorous annual monitoring of Local Partnerships; delivers training and technical assistance; and holds Local Partnerships accountable for meeting performance outcomes in governance, fiscal, and programmatic operations.

# Accountable

NCPC and Local Partnerships maximize efficiencies, leverage resources and produce outcomes.

- Since 2000, there have been more than 500 audits by State auditors and/or independent auditors of NCPC and Smart Start Local Partnerships.
- Together, NCPC and 76 independent Local Partnerships are able to budget resources almost to the penny, reverting only a third of one percent (0.37%) in FY 2011-12.

# Efficient

Smart Start gives local communities the responsibility and flexibility to determine how to increase the health, well-being and development of their children based on the needs and resources of their local communities.

- Smart Start staff are employees of private organizations, not state employees.

# Efficient

NCPC provides cost effective tools and systems for Local Partnerships to do business to ensure reliability, accuracy and economies of scale, including:

- Centralized accounting,
- Centralized bidding process,
- Shared services, and
- Uniform reporting systems.

# What We Do

Support child care businesses in raising quality and improving children's early care and education programs so they are safe, healthy and provide opportunities for children to learn skills they need for success in school. Local Partnerships provide:

- Tailored onsite technical assistance,
- Professional development and training,
- Support for child care professionals to obtain higher education, and
- Quality improvement plans.

# What We Do

**Make it possible for NC PreK to operate statewide.** Smart Start Local Partnerships:

- Help private child care programs improve the quality of their classrooms so they may participate in NC PreK, and
- Administered NC PreK in 54 counties in FY 2011-12. That same year, 64% of children in NC PreK attended a program administered by a Smart Start Local Partnership.

# What We Do

Provide tools to parents increase their knowledge of early childhood development and positive parenting practices.

Programs focus on:

- Early literacy skills (Raising a Reader, Reach Out and Read),
- Education, information and resources (Parents as Teachers, Nurse Family Partnership), and
- Parent coping skills (Incredible Years).

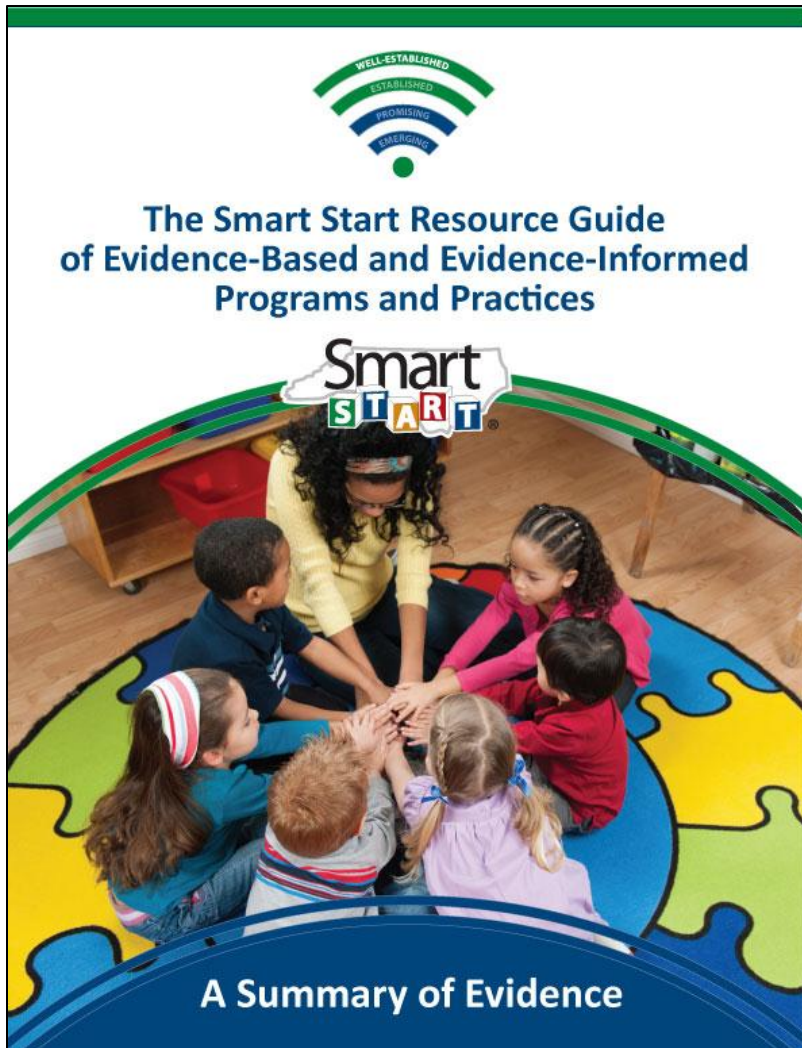


# What We Do

Promote children's healthy development. Programs focus on:

- Childhood obesity prevention(Shape NC, NAPSACC),
- Early identification of developmental delays (ABCD),
- Early intervention, and
- Child care health consultants.

# Outcomes



NCPC has been at the forefront of an effort within the early childhood field to adopt evidence-based and evidence-informed programs—programs based on research with proven outcomes.

# Outcomes

## **More children attend high-quality care. In FY 2011-12:**

- 81% of children whose families receive subsidy attend 4- and 5-star centers as compared to 30% in 2001.
- 94% of children with special needs whose families receive subsidy attend 4- and 5-star centers as compared to 61% in 2001.
- 411 one- and two-star programs improved their star ratings, impacting approximately 12,300 children.

# Outcomes

**More families have the tools they need to raise successful children.**

- The Reach Out and Read Pilot Program is working with 53 medical practices that will impact more than 26,000 children five and under.
- Parents served by Reach Out and Read are up to four times more likely to read aloud to their children.
- During the preschool years, children served by Reach Out and Read score three to six months ahead of their non-Reach Out and Read peers on vocabulary tests.

# Outcomes

**More children with disabilities are identified at a younger age and are referred to early intervention services. In FY 2010-11:**

94% of children whose medical offices participated in the Assuring Better Child Health and Development (ABCD) program received recommended developmental screenings at their most recent well-child visit, compared to 85% before ABCD.

Today, North Carolina has the highest rate of developmental screenings in the nation.

# Outcomes

**More children benefit from better nutrition and physical activity. In FY 2011-12:**

- 72% of child care programs provided 90 minutes or more of daily physical activity as compared to 14% prior to participating in Shape NC.
- 100% of participating child care programs increased healthy food options for children.

# Outcomes

**More children have better third-grade outcomes.** An independent study by researchers from Duke University found:

- Children had higher third-grade reading and math scores and fewer special education placements in counties that received more funding for Smart Start when those children were younger.
- Investments in Smart Start had a “spillover” effect throughout the community, benefitting children who may not have participated in Smart Start supported programs or early education of any kind.

# Outcomes

**More private investment in early education, health and family support.**

- Since 2000, Smart Start has leveraged an additional \$400 million for the state's young children in cash and in-kind contributions.
- Since 2000, North Carolinians have devoted more than 747,000 volunteer hours (the equivalent of 30 FTEs each year) to Smart Start Local Partnerships and NCPC.



# Challenges

Increasing number of children 5 and under.  
749,369 (101,474 more than in 2000)

More children under 5 in poverty.  
30% (up from 19% in 2000)

Least investment goes to children in first three years of life, when 80% of brain development happens. Babies and toddlers whose parents need to work to support their families are in lower quality care.

# Thank You

**The North Carolina of tomorrow depends on the children of today.**



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