



..... *Little Seeds Grow Big Trees*

2019-2020 PROGRAM EVALUATION REPORT

Smart Start of New Hanover County

Contents of Report

***About Smart Start of
New Hanover County***

..... **Page 2**

***Reaching BIG for early
care and education***

..... **Pages 3-5**

***Planting SEEDS with
families***

..... **Pages 6-8**

***GROWING our
community resiliency***

..... **Pages 9-10**

To find out more...

..... **Page 11**

Smart Start of New Hanover County

Our Vision

Smart Start of New Hanover County envisions every child entering school with the health, family support and early education necessary to succeed.

Our Mission

Smart Start of New Hanover County seeks to build bridges to develop, sustain and enhance health, family support and early education services for all children, age's birth to five.

Our Broad Goals

- ✓ Ready Early Educators
 - Maintain and expand high quality early education in New Hanover County
- ✓ Ready Families
 - Serve and engage parents of children in New Hanover County in their first 2000 days of life
- ✓ Ready Community
 - Educate and advocate for a strong early childhood system

Our Racial Equity Statement

The staff and board of Smart Start of New Hanover County have the honor of working with and for families, caregivers, and early educators as they shape the hearts and minds of children in their critical first few years of life. With that honor comes the responsibility to work to ensure not only that we serve all children in every community but also that we actively seek to promote racial justice, stand firmly against racism, and work diligently to eliminate racial disparities. To do this well, we will work in partnership with the community. We welcome the thoughts, insights, and feedback that can help us improve and grow. Only as a learning organization can we do better, and we can learn first by listening.

Smart Start of New Hanover County has a strong history of ongoing organizational excellence. This foundation sets the very highest standards of accountability through strong internal controls and constant programmatic monitoring, allowing optimal use of all funding provided for the children and families of our community.

Reaching BIG to support early care and education.....



Soon after the start of the Pandemic, we all learned the term “essential worker” and learned just how important early care and education is for our working familiesand our economy. Without care for our youngest of children- grocery stores, pharmacies, and gas stations would have remained closed mail would not have been delivered.....and medical staff would be unable to care for the sick. At the direction of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Smart Start took on the role as the local Emergency Contact Agency for licensed early care and education sites - ensuring early care and education sites were stocked with necessary supplies including cleaning items, hand sanitizers, masks, food, and water. We worked with sites closely to see how they could expand their school-age care when the public schools remained virtual. In addition to these emergency measures, Smart Start continued to support high quality early learning throughout the year.



Local Goals:

- ✓ Enhance the quality of early childhood education programs
- ✓ Support inclusive early childhood environments while preventing the expulsion of children in childcare
- ✓ Provide professional development opportunities and recognition for early educators
- ✓ Help families access quality childcare and connect to resources for their children
- ✓ Provide a resource room filled with developmentally appropriate materials
- ✓ Increase the use of appropriate early childhood curriculum and ensure learning is occurring via uniform assessment in all NC Pre-K and Head Start classrooms

Story Share

“With the onset of COVID19 and remote learning for our program, our administration/coaching team began bi-weekly check-in meetings for both public and private site teachers. These meeting served as a way to disseminate information, support online learning platforms, and to ensure all guidelines from our funding sources were being followed. They were a great success! So much so, we intend to keep bi-monthly or monthly Zoom check-ins throughout the 2020-2021 school year. In addition, an online training was offered for Ready Rosie- a parent curriculum we implemented for all public and private preschool classrooms during remote learning.”

(Curriculum & Assessment Project Staff)

Evidence of Impact:

496 early educators participated in trainings to earn in-service hours or continuing education units. **86.5%** of those individuals reported an increase in knowledge after participating

183 Dedication to Education Bonuses were issued, recognizing higher education levels among early educators. There was a **less than 2% turnover rate** for the individuals receiving the bonuses – showing that wages and higher education levels help to stabilize the early childhood workforce

875 children in classrooms, using a uniform curriculum and assessment system, showed substantial growth from the beginning of the year to the end in all domains. End of year results showing children meeting or exceeding expectations:

- **Social/Emotional = 83%**
- **Language = 79%**
- **Physical = 85%**
- **Cognitive = 90%**
- **Mathematics = 67%**
- **Literacy = 79%**

29 early care and education sites received technical assistance to maintain/ increase the quality of care. **100% of early educators** receiving technical assistance reported an increase in understanding of developmentally appropriate and quality of care practices

Smart Start staff “touched” **families and early educators** with phone calls, visits, and emails **531 times** in order to consult, assess, and refer children with suspected special needs and/or challenging behaviors



93.3% of Resource Room members reported that the level of service and the variety of learning materials available for loan met their needs

Story Share

“Smart Start of New Hanover County continues to be a valuable asset to our classroom and families. As a teacher when I think about the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) process for students and families, the word collaboration comes to mind. From the family conferences to discuss initial concerns, the phone calls and emails to New Hanover County Schools, classroom observations with NHCS, and the many community professionals I work with Smart Start staff have been there every step of the way facilitating the flow of communication. Smart Start staff have been available to answer any questions ranging how the IEP process will look for individual students to questions about specific terms and paperwork. It has been a pleasure to work with all of the behavior inclusion specialists!”

(Child Care Center Staff)

Local Quality Assurance:

Program Monitoring	Program Evaluation
Programs were implemented as designed 	Programs met or exceeded goals 

Story Share

"Here at Kiddie Academy, in our toddler classroom, we were experiencing issues related to a biting and behavior issue. We also had some teacher turnover. We contacted Smart Start and staff came to do some observing in our classroom and saw some of the issues going on. After a couple of observations, Smart Start staff sat down with the teachers and administration team to talk about things to implement in the classroom. One of the first strategies to be put in place was a biting log. This log helped the teachers understand when, where, and why the bites were occurring. These logs helped the teachers prevent biting in the classroom. Another strategy put in place was the stop/go choices. The teachers implement this during free play and more structured activities, such as circle time and small groups. Scripted stories were another positive implementation for the classroom. Both the teachers and the children love real-life scenarios in the stories. These stories have help model appropriate behaviors. With Smart Start's help and the tools that the teachers have been given, this classroom has been able to decreases the amount of biting and behavior incidents."

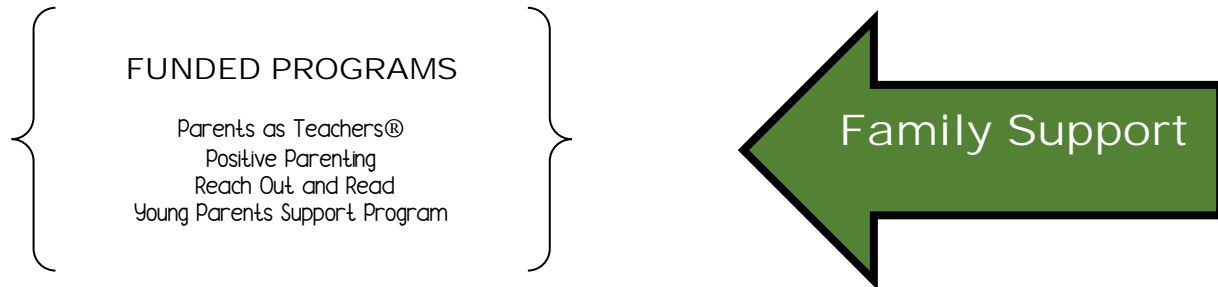
(Kiddie Academy Administrator)

*State Goals Set for New Hanover County

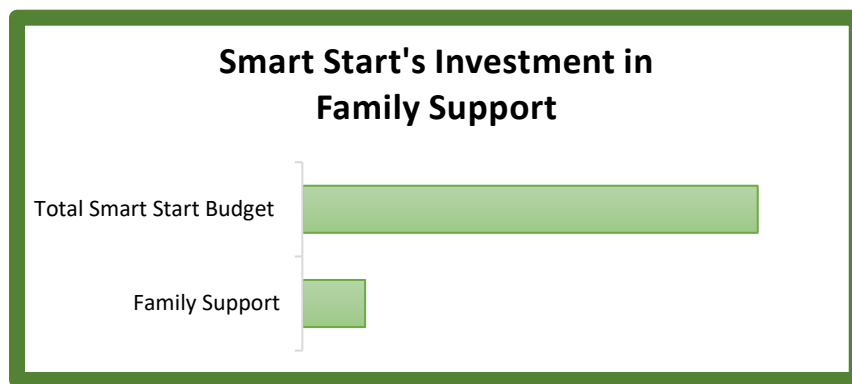
State Standards	2018-2019 Results
Average star rating and % of children in 4 and 5 star-rated childcare sites M = 4.0 and 60% H = 4.0 and 60% each age group	4.11 AND 65% Meets minimum
Average star rating for children receiving childcare subsidies and % of these children in 4 and 5 star-rated childcare sites M = 4.0 and 60% H = 4.0 and 60% each age group	4.48 AND 82% Meets minimum
% of children enrolled in star-rated childcare sites with educated teachers M = 50% - 7 points H = 50% - 7 points in age groups	45% Below minimum
% of children enrolled in star-rated childcare sites with educated administrators M = 50% - 7 points H = 50% - 7 points in age groups	64% Meets minimum

*Based on the 2018-2019 *Community Early Childhood Profile*

Planting SEEDS with Families.....



While COVID-19 affected our ability to connect with families face-to-face, it didn't stop us! We switched gears quickly – moving to virtual group meetings and “home” visits using Zoom and Facebook Live. We continued to engage families in conversations and in learning activities. Throughout the year and during this very stressful time, we continued to focus on enhancing positive parenting practices while ensuring that families with young children had what they needed to be happy and healthy.



Local Goals:

- ✓ Help families develop skills and knowledge to support their child's development
- ✓ Encourage book sharing at home with young children
- ✓ Increase parenting knowledge to promote child language, intellectual growth, and physical and social-emotional skills
- ✓ Introduce families to strategies related to praising desired behaviors and providing safe and engaging environments for their child(ren)S
- ✓ Strengthen social relationships among families

Story Share

Since connecting families to resources is a core component of the PAT program –information was shared about free and reduced-cost internet service that was being offered. Participating families shared they were better able to support their older children with online school, keep better informed with the COVID news, and continue their participation on PAT among other benefits.

(PAT Parent Educator)

Story Share

Like many parents who are involved with the NHC Department of Social Services, John (name has been changed) was struggling with drug addiction and legal charges. John had a "wake-up call" when his 6-month-old child was taken from him and the mother of the child and placed in custody. John satisfied requirements for legal charges he was facing, part of which was to successfully complete and in-patient substance use program. John knew he needed to make this work not only for himself but for his child and family. Professionals working in the in-patient program as well as his DSS Social Worker have all recognized that he is trying and working hard to fulfill every requirement asked of him with a positive attitude. When he came to Smart Start and the Triple P-Positive Parenting Program, he had that same positive attitude and agreeable work ethic. John was a great participant in the class, shared his experiences and parenting pointers, and supported others in the program, too.

John wrote the following about the Triple P-Positive Parenting Program. "This Program is great. It not only taught me ways to manage my child's behaviors but it taught me how to help my child learn things better and understand why a parent does or says what they, we, say."

(Triple P Staff)

Evidence of Impact:

In partnership with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, **66,681 books** were mailed to children's homes helping to create and build-upon a love of reading. This was a **14% increase** from last year

278 family members participated in Smart Start family support services including group sessions and home visits. Throughout the year, these families showed increases in parenting skills related to nurturing and dealing with stress related to their child's behaviors

Families received financial support which helped cover a portion of childcare costs for **295 children**. This support allowed families could go to work knowing their child was being cared for and educated

1,642 families received information about childcare options, child development, and the transition to Kindergarten

63% of families who participated in support groups, along other parents of children with special needs, attended 3 or more weekly meetings



124 families visited the Smart Start Resource Room which is filled with activity books, theme kits, and parenting resources for loan along with a play area for young children to play with a variety of learning materials

Story Share

Zola, a 19-year old parent, was very candid with me from the start about the trauma she had endured growing up. This led to powerful conversations (both one-on-one and in the Circle group) that included additional referrals for added support that she may not have been connected to if she has not been an active participant of the YPSP. Zola's pregnancy was high risk, but she found comfort in the family she had to lean on at Circle groups. Zola gave birth to a healthy baby boy at the end of February. Through the YPSP, Zola learned more about all of the benefits of breastfeeding and was excited to try it for her and her son. Fortunately, her son took to breastfeeding in the hospital right away! Zola admits to having struggled with being a single parent, not working, and being home all of the time during our initial quarantine with Covid 19. We stayed in touch about her mental health and I have been able get her diapers to help ease some financial stress thanks to our local diaper bank. She has always been so gracious for the extra support. Today, Zola can proudly say that she is employed as a hotel house keeper and loving it! She gets her first paycheck soon! Watching Zola grow into the strong woman and mother that she is today is one of my greatest joys!

(Young Parents Support Program Coordinator)

Local Quality Assurance:

Program Monitoring	Program Evaluation
Family Support programs implemented as designed 	Family Support programs met most goals 

***Special note:** Due to challenges related to COVID-19, staff were unable to collect post data on families

*State Goals:

State Standards	2018-2019 Local Results
% of parents who report reading to their children at least 4-6 days a week Within Range = 4.0% and <10.0%	56% (statewide) Below minimum
% of parents who report reading to their children daily M = 55% H = 70%	40% (statewide) Below minimum
% of children ages 0-5 with an investigated report of child abuse/neglect Within Range = 5.0% and <12.0%	8.3% Within the Range

*Based on the 2018-2019 *Community Early Childhood Profile*

About the Smart Start Network:

Smart Start was created in 1993 as an innovative solution to a problem: children were coming to school unprepared to learn. Policymakers recognized that progress would require tapping into the same innovative spirit that inspired private sector advances, and therefore, established Smart Start as a public/private partnership. Independent, private organizations work in all 100 North Carolina Counties through the North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc, and 75 LOCAL Smart Start Partnerships. The power of Smart Start is that it delivers outcomes by giving communities local control to determine the best approach to achieving them.

Visit www.smartstart.org for more information

GROWING our community resiliency.....

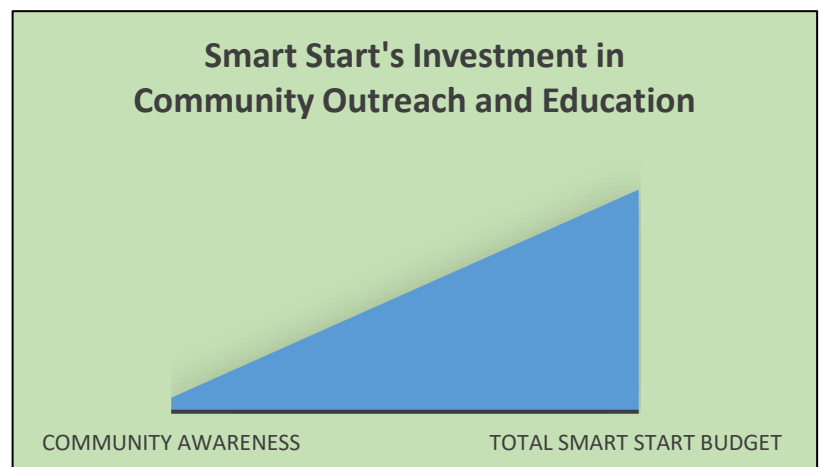


Our community pulls together with heart when times get tough and when stress is high, whether it be a hurricane or a global pandemic. Smart Start dreams of a resilient community where ALL children and families are well..... while working to bring awareness to the importance of the first 2,000 days in a child's life. Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, we formed the following partnerships to support the children and families in our community:

- **New Hanover County Disaster Coalition:** Worked together to provide cleaning kits for early care and education sites
- **Children's Place:** Distributed donated children's clothes to families in need
- **NHC Library:** Donated children's books to medical practices to enrich early literacy waiting rooms
- **Corning:** Distributed emergency kits to early childhood programs
- **United Health Care:** Shared personal protective equipment with the families and educators we are serving to keep those we work with safe
- **Nourish NC:** Distributed books, along with meals, to families with young children
- **NC Department of Health and Human Services:** Ensured that each licensed childcare site had the supplies they needed to operate safely during the pandemic

Local Goals:

- ✓ Increase access to and awareness of services for children and families
- ✓ Leverage partners and supporters
- ✓ Engage the community in an early childhood campaign
- ✓ Educate the community about the importance of the first 2000 days in a child's life
- ✓ Facilitate trainings for professionals which focuses on using a strength-based approach to working with families



Evidence of Impact:

1,530 website “hits” and **1,300 Facebook “likes”** - proving that families and community members are actively seeking information about young children and supports for families

50 community members joined our virtual fundraising event where Children’s Champions were honored



Staff served on **40 task forces/committees** during the year- providing a voice for our youngest children

143 families attended our Early Childhood Family Festival, receiving important resource information and participating in early learning activities with their children

Survey results showing an increase in parent knowledge among **families** we have “touched”:

- **91%** had an increase in parent knowledge after interacting with Smart Start staff
- **84%** learned more about how children grow and learn
- **79%** learned about an activity they could do with a child
- **71%** tried out a new activity they learned from Smart Start with a child
- **84%** learned about services that could support them

Local Quality Assurance:

Program Monitoring	Program Evaluation
Family Support programs were implemented as designed 	Community Outreach and Education met most goals 

***Special note:** Due to challenges related to COVID-19, Smart Start staff were unable to proceed with face-to-face outreach and education events

*State Goals:

State Standards	2018-2019 Local Results
% of children ages 0-2 who receive early intervention or special education services Within Range = 4.0% and <10.0%	4.7% Within range
% of children ages 3-5 who receive early intervention or special education services Within Range = 4.0% and <10.0%	4.1% Within range
% of children enrolled in Medicaid who receive a well-child exam M = 75% H = 85%	83% Meets Minimum
% of low-income children age 2-4 who are at a healthy weight M = 66.1% H = 70%	68.1% Meets Minimum

*Based on the 2018-2019 **Community Early Childhood Profile/SSNHC** community awareness efforts broadly address the state goals in ALL topic areas. This includes the indicators specifically related to health below and the within others previously described in this report

Want to know more about Smart Start of New Hanover County?



Contact Us.....

Location: 3534 South College Road, Suite F, Wilmington, North Carolina 28412

Hours: 8:00am to 5:00pm, Monday through Friday

Phone: 910-815-3731

Visit our Website.....

www.newhanoverkids.org

Follow Us on Social Media



a partner
in the

Smart Start
network.