



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 17, 2017

Press Contact: Heather Strickland

919-821-9564, hstrickland@smartstart.org

WILSON COUNTY PARTNERSHIP FOR CHILDREN AWARDED FEDERAL FUNDS TO ENSURE CHILDREN START KINDERGARTEN HEALTHY

Three Local Organizations Take the Lead on Fighting Early Childhood Obesity

[North Carolina] – Child Care Services Association (CCSA), Randolph County Partnership for Children, and Wilson County Partnership for Children have each been awarded \$400,000 over four years to increase the number of children starting kindergarten at a healthy weight. Each have been selected as sub-grantees of a grant from the Social Innovation Fund (SIF), a federal program of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS).

The North Carolina Partnership for Children (NCPC)/Smart Start was originally awarded a \$4 million grant in 2016 from the Corporation for National and Community Service Social Innovation Fund to continue to mobilize public and private support for Shape NC: Healthy Starts for Young Children Initiative. Shape NC, an initiative of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina (BCBSNC) Foundation and NCPC created in 2010, assists communities across the state to promote healthy eating and active play among North Carolina's youngest children, from birth through age five. The initiative works with child care programs to instill healthy behaviors early on, creating a solid foundation for a healthy life.

The Randolph and Wilson Partnerships for Children are part of the statewide Smart Start network and have a long history of improving the quality of early care and education in their communities. CCSA has been a leader in the field of early childhood education for over 40 years with locations in both Durham and Orange counties and will implement this project across both counties.

"We are beyond thrilled to have the opportunity to reach more young children in order to combat early childhood obesity" stated the Board of Directors and the Executive Director, NaDene Tucker at Wilson County Partnership for Children. "We hope to make a tremendous impact in Wilson County and we welcome the community to work with us toward meeting this goal."

"These organizations are leaders in their communities when it comes to serving children and families," stated Cindy Watkins, President of NCPC. "I am proud that

The North Carolina Partnership for Children

1100 Wake Forest Road, Raleigh, NC 27604 – info@smartstart.org – 919.821.7999 – fax: 919.821.8050

 www.smartstart.org  [/smartstart](https://www.facebook.com/smartstart)  [@ncsmartstart](https://twitter.com/ncsmartstart)  [/ncsmartstart](https://www.youtube.com/ncsmartstart)

they will be a part of this and help expand the great work of building outdoor learning environments, promoting exercise, and encouraging children to eat more fruits and vegetables.”

SIF is a powerful approach to transforming lives and communities that positions the federal government to be a catalyst for impact – mobilizing private resources to find and grow community solutions with evidence of results. As part of the SIF, NCPC must match the federal funds dollar-for-dollar and this is matched again by the local, community-based organizations selected to receive sub-grants.

“The Social Innovation Fund is an innovative program that seeks to invest in truly compelling solutions to the persistent challenges facing our communities,” said Lois Nembhard, acting director of the Social Innovation Fund at CNCS. “Smart Start has a proven track record for deepening community impact toward improved health outcomes and decreased health disparities among young children in childcare, and we are thrilled to have the opportunity to expand our impact in North Carolina.”

BCBSNC Foundation has been the primary funder of Shape NC – investing more than \$8 million into the program’s development and implementation - prior to the SIF grant.

“The commitment of federal dollars re-emphasizes just how critical this work of starting during the earliest years is - to our local communities, our state and our nation,” stated Kathy Higgins, President of the BCBSNC Foundation. “The partnership between NCPC and the BCBSNC Foundation has had a tremendous impact on the health and lives of not only our youngest children, but also their families and teachers. We are proud of the success we have seen and grateful that this work is expanding.”

Since its inception in 2009, the SIF has grown into nearly a \$1 billion social impact incubator within the federal government, creating public-private partnerships that deliver high-impact, community-based solutions that work. As a result of \$341 million in federal grants and more than \$672 million in non-federal match commitments, the SIF has awarded 51 grants to grant making institutions supporting more than 490 non-profits working in 46 states and the District of Columbia.

###

Smart Start is a network of 75 nonprofit local partnerships that serve all 100 North Carolina counties. This network is led by The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc. (NCPC) that ensures fiscal and programmatic accountability, and coordinates the statewide network to create better outcomes for children and families.

The Social Innovation Fund (SIF) is a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service, a federal agency that engages millions of Americans in service through its AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and Volunteer Generation Fund programs, and leads the nation's volunteer and service efforts. SIF positions the federal government to be a catalyst for impact—using public and private resources to find and grow community-based nonprofits with evidence of results. The Social Innovation Fund focuses on overcoming challenges confronting low-income Americans in three areas of priority need: economic opportunity, healthy futures, and youth development. To learn more, visit www.nationalservice.gov/sif.

The Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina (BCBSNC) Foundation is an independent, charitable foundation with the mission of improving the health and well-being of North Carolinians. Since its founding in 2000, BCBSNC Foundation has invested more than \$113 million in North Carolina communities through more than 870 grants. BCBSNC Foundation grantmaking and special initiatives are focused in three key areas: improving health outcomes of populations served by safety net organizations through improved access to medical and dental care; increasing physical activity and access to healthy, local foods; and increasing the effectiveness of nonprofit organizations and their leaders. More information is available at bcbsncfoundation.org.