



*Helping children from birth
through age five*
receive the care, nurture, and
education they need to thrive.

a partner in the
smart start network





Amy A. Brown

Executive Director

our vision

Our vision for Rowan County is that every child will receive the education, nurturing, and support needed to provide the foundation for them to grow into healthy, productive citizens.

our mission

Smart Start Rowan will collaborate to offer services that foster growth, encourage learning, and provide resources and support to community partners and families of children, prenatal through age five in Rowan County.

The Smart Start Rowan Board of Directors and staff are happy to share with you the results of our Fiscal Year 2023-2024 investments made and services provided to our community. We're extremely proud of all that was accomplished, as we continued with our commitment to laying the ground work for future success at the most critical time in young children's lives. All children need and deserve a "Smart Start", and we want them to enter school healthy, ready, and able to learn. We work closely with partner agencies, to ensure children have access to affordable and high-quality child care, health care and early intervention services, parenting support programs, and early literacy opportunities, which will all help place them on a trajectory of success in school and later in life.

The work of Smart Start Rowan is critically important to the economic development of our community. Higher investments in early childhood programming pay off in the long run, with decreased remediation, healthcare, and court costs, as well as a more productive and viable workforce in later years.

If you are reading this report, it means that you care about and are invested in supporting Rowan County's young children and families. I hope you will consider joining together with Smart Start Rowan, so that we can fulfill our vision that every child will receive the education, nurturing, and support needed to provide the foundation for them to grow into healthy, productive citizens. If you would like more information about services provided by our agency, or to volunteer or donate to support our work, please call 704-630-9085, check out our website at www.rowan-smartstart.org, find us on social media, or visit us at 1329 S. Jake Alexander Boulevard in Salisbury.

Thank you,

Amy A. Brown

Executive Director

our impact



More Children Attending High Quality Care

2003

34%

children age 0-5
enrolled in 4 or 5
star facilities

2024

82%



★★★★★ More High Quality Care Options for Families

Average Star Rating for
Children in 1-5 Star Care

2003

2.98

2024

4.67



More Early Childhood Teacher Education

2014

47%

children age 0-5
enrolled in facilities
with at least 75% of
lead teachers with
college degrees

2024

68%



Early Care and Education Availability and Affordability

Provides financial assistance with child care costs for eligible families, as well as enhancements to child care programs to support high quality early learning environments.

Programs Funded: Child Care Subsidy and Subsidy Services Support, Star License Enhancement (SLE)

179

Children (ages 0-5) received Smart Start child care subsidy assistance

21

Child care facilities and family child care homes, all 4 or 5 star, received monetary enhancements for participation in the SLE activity

program impact

100% of subsidized children were enrolled in regulated, licensed child care with the majority of those enrolled in 4-and-5-star facilities.



Early Care and Education Quality

Improves the quality of care for young children in local child care facilities, family child care homes, Head Start programs, public schools, and church preschools.

Programs Funded: Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC), Education in Action (EIA), Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R), NC Pre-K Quality Enhancement & Support (NCPK QE&S), Childcare Health Consultation (CCHC), WAGE\$

56

Child care facilities/family child care homes received technical assistance (Note: This is a duplicated count based on the type of technical assistance provided)

198

Technical assistance opportunities were provided to early childhood professionals

66

Trainings/workshops were offered to early childhood professionals

5

Childcare staff received higher education advising and/or completed college courses

31

Child care staff from 18 facilities/family child care homes utilized the Early Learning Resource Center

114

Teachers and directors received salary supplements through WAGE\$

program impact

Of all Rowan County WAGE\$ participants, 96% shared that the supplements help ease financial stress and 100% shared that the supplements help them feel more appreciated and recognized for their work.

Family Support, Child Health, Literacy, and Systems Building

Provides families with education, information, resources and support so their children can have the best start in life.

Programs Funded: Assuring Better Child Health & Development (ABCD), Community Awareness & Education, Dolly Parton's Imagination Library (DPIL), Healthy Beginnings, Kaleidoscope Play & Learn (KPL), Program Coordination & Evaluation, Reach Out & Read (ROR), and Triple P

Over 8200

Young children participated in child health and wellness programs offered by 6 medical practices, including Rowan County Health Department

276

Parents/caregivers participated in family support programs, including one-on-one and group parenting support, as well as parent/child playgroups

8,976

Children, age 0-5, received DPIL books

6,758

Books were distributed to children for parents to read at home, by 27 medical practitioners trained in the ROR program.

187

Total participants attended 3 large parent-child interactive community events hosted by Smart Start Rowan

program impact

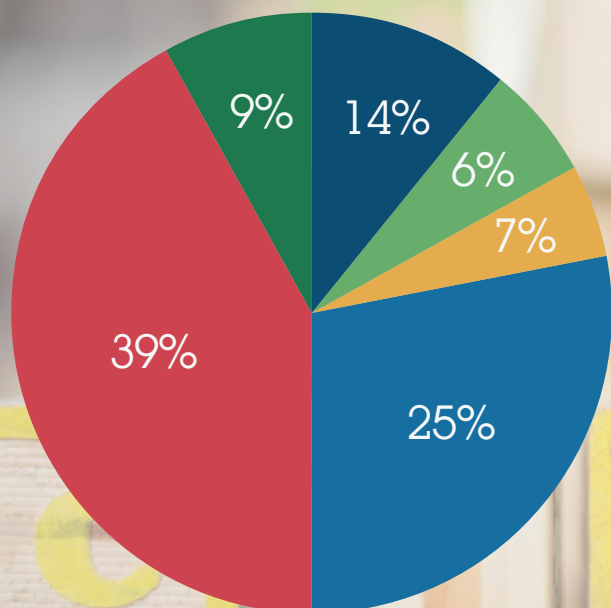
95% of caregivers felt more confident with their parenting responsibilities after participating in the Triple P-Positive Parenting Program.



The NC Pre-K program is designed to provide high-quality educational experiences to enhance school readiness for eligible four-year-old children. Children are prepared in all five of the developmental domains that are critical to children's overall well-being and success in reading and math as they enter school.

Number of Children: **381**
Number of Sites: **17**
Number of classrooms: **27**

Approaches to Play and Learning
Emotional and Social Development
Health and Physical Development
Language Development and Communication
Cognitive Development



Our Smart Start Investments

Systems Building
\$283,681
Health
\$115,480
Family Support
\$133,748
Early Care & Education
\$505,231
Child Care Subsidy
\$800,905
Administration
\$184,427

Our Other Investments

NC Pre-Kindergarten
\$2,011,522
CCR&R Core Services
\$18,443
Dolly Parton's Imagination Library
\$6,215
Reach Out and Read
\$19,360
Other
\$50,226

Community Partners

Kannapolis City Schools

Local Child Care Facilities

Local Family Child Care Homes

Rowan County Department of Social Services

Rowan County Health Department

Rowan-Salisbury Schools

Salisbury-Rowan Community Action Agency-Head Start

Terrie Hess Child Advocacy Center

Administration Staff

Amy Brown, Executive Director

Cinthia Rodriguez, Director of Finance and Administration

Denise Heinke, Director of Outreach and Development

Janira Hernandez, Finance and Administration Specialist

Program Staff

Laura Villegas, Director of Programs

Donna Hogue, Director of Early Education

Amanda May, NC Pre-K Program Lead

Betty Trujillo, Early Education Program Lead

Ermaelyn Jaeck, Parent Educator

Cathy Stewart, NC Pre-K Early Education Specialist

Tania Cuevas, Program Assistant

Lizbeth Berio, Resource Specialist

Lisa Edwards, ABCD/Reach Out and Read Coordinator

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*Cover photo feature of Jimmy Greene,

2024 Dr. Shirley P. Ritchie Champion for Young Children