



MEDIA RELEASE

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Partnership releases first report on Durham County kindergarteners' health status

Data collected from the Kindergarten Health Assessment offers initial snapshot on the health needs of incoming kindergarten students

Durham – One in four Durham County kindergarteners have a reported illness or health risk, such as asthma or allergies and one in five kindergarteners are considered overweight or obese, according to a new report Durham's Partnership for Children released Tuesday to the Results Based Accountability (RBA) Committee – Children Ready for and Succeeding in School.

The new report, ***Healthy and Ready: Assessing Children's Health Status Upon Public School Entry***, shares the findings from an initiative to collect Kindergarten Health Assessment (KHA) forms from all incoming kindergarteners enrolled in Durham Public Schools. Since 1985, all North Carolina kindergarteners must enter school with a completed KHA form.

"The report is a great tool to assess the health of our young children when they begin kindergarten," said Marsha Basloe, executive director of Durham's Partnership for Children. "Health and physical development is one of five domains of learning that the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction cites as impacting early learning. This report confirms that there is a tremendous need for identifying child health concerns early, expanding health related programs that provide consultation for children with developmental concerns and educate and support families with young children about the importance of regular well child visits and nutrition and obesity prevention."

The findings were collected from the second page of the form which lists anonymous health information completed by a licensed health care provider. Compiled health information, includes developmental screenings, hearing and vision screenings, blood pressure, Body Mass Index, illnesses, and other health risks.

Working closely with Durham Public Schools, the Program and Evaluation Department of the Partnership collected and coded the reports. With a grant from Durham's RBA Initiative through the Children Ready For and Succeeding in School Outcome Committee, the KHA Project worked with the North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics to analyze the data. The Partnership also convened a KHA Advisory Group made up of local and state early childhood health experts to review and offer recommendations from the data findings. Recommendations include raising community awareness about the importance of the KHA as a tool in identifying children's health concerns, increased education for health providers to use standardized developmental screenings for all young children during well-child visits and the need to identify model programs to reduce early childhood overweight and obesity rates.

The Partnership aims to use the reports to educate the public on the indicators for school readiness in the areas that support the health of young children. Data in the report will help the RBA Children's Committee, the medical community, elementary schools, the Partnership and its collaborating partners with current planning efforts around health programming for young children.

The full report can be accessed at the Partnership's Web site: <http://www.dpfc.net/Reports.aspx>.

About Durham's Partnership for Children

Durham's Partnership for Children celebrates 15 years making young children a priority. Founded in 1994 and first funded in 1995 to administer the Smart Start grant in Durham County, the Partnership works as an independent, local nonprofit that serves young children birth to age 5 and their families under North Carolina's nationally recognized initiative to ensure all children enter school healthy and ready to succeed. For 15 years, the Partnership has helped working parents pay for child care, improve the quality of child care and provided health and family support services to thousands of Durham County families with young children. The Partnership works to achieve its

mission: *To mobilize and unify the Durham community to create and support innovative and successful approaches to serving the needs of children birth to age 5 and their families*, by working with funded partners, groups and organizations in Durham County to support and coordinate efforts impacting young children and their families. The Partnership also administers the More at Four Program in Durham County serving more than 400 children and the new Early Head Start Grant serving Durham infants and toddlers beginning May 2010. For more information about the Partnership, visit www.dpfc.net or call 919-403-6960, ext 221.

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