



Background Information

Overview of Durham's Partnership for Children

In 1993, Durham County completed a comprehensive needs and resources assessment, which revealed gaps in child care, health services and family support services throughout the county. As a result, Durham's Partnership for Children ("Partnership") was formed to enable the county to apply for Smart Start funds. These state funds are awarded to counties on a competitive basis.

Durham was selected as a Smart Start county in October of 1994. On receipt of funding in January 1995, the Partnership began to develop a comprehensive and integrated system to meet the child care, health care and other critical needs of young children and their families.

Prior to the establishment of the Partnership, our community had many outstanding services in place, but the delivery of these services was often fragmented and failed to help families effectively take control of their lives. Now the Partnership is spearheading fundamental changes that correct deficiencies in our old system. We are creating new ways to serve our families and provide them with what they want and need the most.

We know that our investment is having a dramatic impact on the lives of individual children and parents. We also know it is the best investment we can make for our community as a whole.

The Importance of Investing in Children and Families

By the age of 5, much of a child's social skills, intellect and personality have been shaped, and the foundation for learning and communication has been built. Studies show that early intervention with high-quality services is the most cost-effective way to ensure our future economic development and prosperity.

Furthermore, research indicates that every dollar spent now on early childhood services saves more than \$7.00 down the road in remedial education, welfare, prisons and crime. Clearly, investing in young children and families is an investment in our future. Strong families build strong communities.

The Goals of Durham's Partnership for Children

We serve as a focal point for change that has direct and measurable impact on children and families. Four goals guide our efforts to improve their lives:

- All Durham's children are safe, healthy, and developing to their full potential.
- All families in Durham with children birth through age five will be able to choose resources and support that will empower and strengthen



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them in their roles as primary providers, nurturers and teachers for their children.

- All Durham's communities will value, respect, support and share responsibilities for the well being of our children and all who care for them.
- All Durham's systems will work in collaboration, using practices that are innovative, inclusive and family-centered to achieve measurable, sustainable, quality outcomes for young children and their families.

Collaboration is the Key to Success

Durham's Partnership for Children is a private, nonprofit organization governed by a 27-member Board of Directors. Board members represent business and civic groups, churches, local government, health and human service agencies, parents and education and nonprofit organizations. They are all volunteers who contribute their expertise, professional resources and time to building a stronger future for Durham County. A professional staff assists the Board.

In addition, the Partnership encourages the participation of other human service agencies, parents, business leaders and teachers in a highly collaborative effort designed to improve children's lives.

In Durham County

- We have more than 18,000 children under the age of 6.
- More than 19% of children live in poverty.
- More than 40% of our children are on Medicaid.
- More than 70% of mothers with young children work outside of the home.
- Only 43% of preschool children enrolled in child care are in programs meeting higher than minimum quality standards.
- The infant mortality rate is 7.1%.

Sources

Child Care Services Association, Durham Smart Start Application, Early Childhood Index, Durham Human Needs Action Committee Needs Assessment